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THE NEW
STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

FOR the first time the head of one of the great democratic empires has said what needed saying in a voice that can be heard and understood by the anxious populations of the world. That President Roosevelt's words could not be kept from the German people we know from the fact that Hitler is dealing with them in a birthday speech before the specially summoned Reichstag. Mr. Roosevelt's letter, addressed to Germany and Italy, has two parts and the second is dependent on the first. Provided that the Axis Powers will publicly pledge themselves to refrain from further acts of aggression, the President suggests that there is no question of politics or economics which the democracies will not be willing freely and openly to discuss. This appeal has been endorsed by Lord Halifax and by political leaders of all parties in this country. The danger—and it is a grave danger—is that Hitler may attempt to separate the two parts of Roosevelt's appeal, planning with the help of dupes in this country and France to win further concessions which will make him master of Europe without demobilising his troops or removing the threat of aggression that makes life a nightmare in every country in Europe. The security against this is to hasten British and French understanding with the U.S.S.R., link ourselves as closely as possible with the U.S.A. and offer Hitler a conference on terms of equality. We wish that the leaders of this country would follow the President's example in appealing directly or indirectly to the millions of people whose greatest desire is for peace but who know that there can be no peace in a world constantly threatened by Nazi ambitions. If Hitler—and, above all, the German people—know that aggression will be met by resolute resistance in East and West, while change by discussion is always possible, there is still a chance of avoiding catastrophe.

Moves in the Game

Meanwhile both sides are feverishly engaged in gathering allies and the Axis Powers are occupying positions which will strengthen their power of terrorisation when the moment comes to offer us war or surrender. Germany may not yet have decided whether the principal pressure or the first blow is to come in the West or the Mediterranean, and Hitler's decision will no doubt depend on his estimate of the chances of detaching Poland and the Balkan countries, one by one, from the democratic front.

Pressure on Poland to yield Danzig continues both from the Reich and from London; its "spontaneous" adhesion to Germany would probably not be regarded as a *casus belli*. A Danzig coup may take place before the Führer's speech. Nazi pressure continues on Jugoslavia, and the Rumanian Foreign Minister, during his visit this week to Berlin, has been "worked on" not merely by von Ribbentrop but by the Führer himself—with what result it is too early to say. The appointment of von Papen as envoy to Turkey, following Goebbels's recent visit to Angora, suggests that Germany is trying hard to persuade the Turkish Government that neutrality would pay best and would be rewarded not merely by credits—which represent all that is at Britain's disposal—but by important "rectifications" of Turkey's frontier in Europe.

Jugoslavia and the Axis

The news that Prince Paul has postponed his projected meeting on the Danube with King Carol, and that Dr. Markovitch, the Jugoslav Foreign Minister, is visiting Rome in the footsteps of the Hungarian Prime Minister, tends to strengthen the impression that Jugoslavian policy is veering towards attachment to the Axis. From Italy, where occupation of Fiume by the Reich would be badly regarded, Jugoslavia probably has little to fear, so long as she "behaves herself" in Italian eyes. There is little doubt that the Belgrade Government were informed by Rome of Italy's intention to annex Albania and offered no objection. If partition be Jugoslavia's ultimate fate, the prime mover will be not Italy but Germany, whose ability to strike southwards towards Zagreb is immediate if a pretext can be found. For the moment Berlin appears to be awaiting the outcome of the negotiations between M. Tsvetkovitch and Dr. Machek on the question of Croatian autonomy. So far, the discussions appear to have made little progress. M. Tsvetkovitch is believed to have offered, in principle, to revise the constitution and, in particular, to modify the electoral system in Croatia's favour if the Croats will agree to participate in the central government. The proposals which Dr. Machek is reported to have tabled are much farther-reaching. He is said to be demanding the division of Jugoslavia into three self-governing units—Serbia, Croatia and the Banat of Drava—and his conception of Croatia is that it should include Bosnia as well as the provinces of Dalmatia and Slavonia. This is a bitter pill for Belgrade to swallow; but if the demands of Croatia, with its considerable German minority, meet with a flat rejection, there will be a sinister resemblance between the situation and that which existed in Slovakia six weeks ago.

Spain and the Axis

As an epilogue to the Spanish tragedy the Non-Intervention Committee, having served its purpose—or to be more exact a number of calamitous purposes—has now gone into liquidation. Meanwhile the principal interveners are well established in the country—with its nominal master, General Franco, as a signatory of the Anti-Comintern Pact and well tied to the Axis. The optimists of the West still effect to believe in the "independence" of Spain. M. Bonnet on Tuesday was talking cheerfully of the assurances he has received that foreign troops would go home directly after the "victory parade" in Madrid—which, incidentally, has been postponed from May 2nd to the 15th—and Lord Halifax talked in a similar strain in the House of Lords. Similar promises in the past have been followed, not by departures of Italians, but by the arrival of fresh contingents in the Peninsula. Nor, if all is well in the new Spain, do we understand why Franco's troops should be massing in La Linea, Algeciras and other positions round Gibraltar. The movements of the German fleet to the Mediterranean (as well as to Lisbon and Spanish ports on the Atlantic side) suggest that Germany does not intend, in case of war, again to have her fleet cooped up in the Baltic. In the existing circumstances it can hardly be regarded as a mere aquatic carnival, and the disposition of the French and British ships at Gibraltar and Malta suggests a graver view of the situation than one might gather from the prattle of the Bonnets in Paris and in London.

The Chinese Offensive

The struggle in the Far East has taken a turn for the better. A determined Chinese attack is in progress as we write round Canton; considerable ground has been gained, and Sheklung and other towns have been recaptured. This advance it is believed is the prelude to a general offensive on a still wider front. Severe fighting has been reported in the last few days in other provinces—Kiangsi, Hupeh, Honan, Shansi—and at many points the Chinese claim important victories. Messages from Chungking stress the moral effect of all these successful movements, even though weakness in material and organisation in some cases prevents their being pressed home. The Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-shek, who has just returned to the capital from a tour of the war zones, is in a confident mood. Chinese strategy, which is based on guerilla fighting and in gaining time by the temporary sacrifice of territory, is fully justifying itself, he declares. The invaders are "being dragged deeper and deeper into a swamp from which they will find it difficult to extricate themselves." And he predicts that, with the strain on her people becoming steadily heavier, Japan will presently have to acknowledge the failure of her plans, and will end not as mistress of Asia but as a second-rate Power.

Precautionary Organisation

Apart from the question of physical protection against air bombardment, the Government's plans for organisation in the event of emergency go forward, at least on paper, with some show of energy. On Tuesday it was announced that on the outbreak of war a Ministry of Food would be immediately established. The Ministry would be the sole permitted importer of foodstuffs, wholesale and retail prices would be fixed by Order, and a ration-card system would be at once inaugurated. Steps are also being taken to provide a 48-hour emergency supply in reception areas for persons evacuated. The details of the scheme have a business-like look, though it would be reassuring to learn that bulk storage of non-perishable foodstuffs is being carried out on a much larger scale than has so far been revealed. In the absence of a comprehensive register of the population it is difficult to see how evacuation schemes, for which a time-table is said to have been worked out in clear detail, can be made to operate in practice without great confusion. The Regional Commissioners, whose names have now been published, are expected to improvise local emergency administration if

communications between the Departments of State and county areas are interrupted by hostilities; but the extent of disorganisation which might be caused by totalitarian war is so unpredictable that, short of nation-wide regimentation, of every individual activity, the Government can hardly guarantee to prevent serious dislocation of supplies and services in the early stages, at least, of a war.

Business—Partly as Usual

While there is still hope of peace, the Cabinet naturally hesitates to undertake the task of organising the entire nation on a war footing; but there is no very obvious excuse for the half-hearted manner in which it is approaching the question of organising the country's industrial resources for intensified production of armaments. The decision appears to have been reluctantly reached that the establishment of a Department of Supply, to deal primarily with War Office needs, can no longer safely be deferred; but there is no indication yet that the Government has begun to recognise that if guns are to be forthcoming at an adequate pace, without shortages and bottlenecks in the flow of production, there must be radical interference with the indiscriminate output of luxuries. The diversion of steel to cinema-construction is in present circumstances military folly; far too large a proportion of the engineering trades is still occupied in supplying luxury, or at least non-essential, demand; and, as Mr. Keynes has emphasised, if rearmament is to be prevented from throwing our foreign trade balance badly out of equilibrium, import-export transactions can no longer safely be left to individual enterprise, unaided and uncontrolled. What is needed is not merely a Department of Supply, without adequate powers even to secure priority for munition contracts, but a Ministry of Planning with powers to discipline every branch of industry and trade. From that departure from "normality" the Government, determined to cling to "profits as usual," still shrinks.

Anderson versus Finsbury Council

Seven months after the Munich crisis, the Government's shelter policy is at last taking shape. In factories they are to be provided by employers and should be completed by next September, while for the home the Anderson steel-coop and the reinforced cellar are deemed sufficient. That deep shelters are rejected even for densely populated areas is evident from the fact that Sir John has refused to sanction the Finsbury scheme. The grounds which he gives for his decision are so insufficient that it seems probable that he has not deigned to state his real reasons. The technical defects which his experts have discovered could easily be rectified, while the constructional difficulties which he raises have not deterred several well-known firms from tendering for the one shelter with which Finsbury is proceeding in defiance of the Home Office. Sir John's reluctance to embark on a deep-shelter policy is probably due to quite different motives. The Government may dislike the Finsbury scheme precisely because its object is to provide too complete a security, while the Government may think it better, if war comes, to train the people to work on with as few breaks as possible, and may fear that the possibility of escape to deep shelters will disturb the factory routine. This and other issues of shelter policy and construction are ably argued in *Air Raid Defence* (price 6*d*.) the first bulletin issued by the Air Raid Defence League. Whatever the Government's real reasons for refusing deep shelters, we should prefer to have them stated instead of being fobbed off with technical trivialities.

The Nurses' Case

There was an important debate on the Nursing Services in the House of Commons on Tuesday. The inadequacy of the supply of nurses, both institutional and domiciliary, was stressed by Sir Francis Fremantle and a number of other speakers; we need something like 20,000 new entrants a year to the profession, as against 12,000, which is the present rate of entry. And if we are to get them (and if we are to be fair to those already in the service) there will have to be big reforms in their conditions of work and pay and training. There is no doubt whatever about the excessively long hours of a host of nurses. There is no doubt about their under-payment; many of them in great hospitals, as one speaker pointed out, receive less than the wages of a domestic servant, and even highly qualified ward sisters can seldom expect to get more than £120 a year. Another genuine and widespread grievance is the unreasonable regulations and restrictions, though there are a few happy exceptions to this, particularly in the new rules of the London County Council. The Minister of Health admitted the strength of the case that had been made both in the House and by the recent Athlone and Allness Reports. But he would not commit himself to anything at the moment beyond the issue of circulars to ginger up the local authorities and the assurance that the Government are "giving careful consideration" to the question of nurses' salaries. We hope this phrase is not a euphemism for shelving the question; prompt action is needed.

Alderman or Mayor—or Both?

A decision in the King's Bench division last Tuesday settled a nice point of electoral law. Last November Gateshead was due for its triennial Aldermanic elections and there were nine candidates chosen as usual on a party basis. Aldermen are elected by a vote of the Council, *exclusive of aldermen*, but the Mayor, Alderman Pickering, did vote and the result was a draw with 15 votes each for the Labour and the Moderate list. Thereupon the Mayor gave his casting vote for Labour and thereby ensured for his party a comfortable majority on the council. The Moderates thereupon petitioned the High Court on the ground that, since the Mayor was an alderman, he was not entitled to vote on the first occasion. But the Court, arguing that to exclude the aldermen from voting is to leave out the Mayor and Council, dismissed the petition. The publicity given to the case will be useful, if it reminds the electorate of the futility of "the Aldermanic Gown" in Councils run on party lines. Not only does this anachronism tip the advantage unfairly in favour of a party which has gained a bare majority, but it only too frequently preserves the aged and infirm as semi-permanent members of the Council long after an irate electorate would have defeated them at the polls. The "second chamber" of local government is as indefensible as the House of Lords.

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THE NEW PHASE IN EUROPE

THREE important events have changed the situation since we wrote last week. The first was the British guarantee to Rumania and Greece which necessitated the first serious conversations between this country and the U.S.S.R. The second was Mr. Roosevelt's action in sending the American fleet to the Far East, and the third was his challenging appeal to Hitler and Mussolini.

The British guarantee to Greece was expected; the guarantee to Rumania was a sudden snap decision. King Carol made it clear on the morning of the 13th that unless Britain and France acted immediately Rumania would be compelled, in effect, to yield to Hitler her grain, her oil and her independence. The British Government made a prompt decision. But a guarantee of Rumania without Russian co-operation was even more absurd than a similar guarantee to Poland, and the House of Commons showed that it realised the importance of an immediate Russian pact. Therefore, serious conversations were begun for the first time with the U.S.S.R. The Russian position was clearly stated. The U.S.S.R. promises full assistance provided that Britain will join in a general pact of collective security or make a mutual guarantee pact with the U.S.S.R. But the Russians are profoundly suspicious of any proposals which do not involve this reciprocal guarantee. For some time they feared that the British guarantee to Poland was an invitation to Germany to use the Rumanian route to the Ukraine, and they still have strong grounds for objecting to the British proposal that they should make a unilateral declaration underwriting the British guarantee to Rumania and Poland and that this guarantee should then be extended to cover the Baltic countries. If politics were Euclidean, a guarantee of countries already guaranteed by Britain and France would be the equivalent of an alliance with Britain and France in the event of an attack on the guaranteed countries. But geography and ideology make a difference. What would British and French help mean? Russia does not trust the politicians of Munich, whom she very naturally suspects of still hoping to divert Hitler to the East. If, for instance, Germany attacked Poland or Rumania and Russia fulfilled her obligations, the British might, in the Russian view, impose a blockade which would not be immediately effective, and then, following the Abyssinian precedent (when the provisions of Article 16 were nominally carried out), make terms with Hitler and leave him to carry on an anti-Bolshevik war in the East. That is the kind of reputation which the National Government has earned for Britain, not only in the U.S.S.R. but generally on the Continent. The British proposal is, however, considered sufficiently serious for Mr. Maisky to have flown to Moscow to discuss the situation with his Government.

It is to be remembered that Russia is in a very strong position in this discussion and Britain in a weak one. Britain has suddenly guaranteed the whole of Russia's vast frontiers with Poland and Rumania, and until now has asked for no reciprocal guarantee from the U.S.S.R. Indeed, Russia has been carefully told that these new allies whom Britain has so suddenly espoused will have no truck with the Red Army, and every discussion with Britain has revealed the presence in high places of men who fear the Nazis less than the possible Socialism of their own common people. Moreover, apart from prejudiced anti-Bolshevik feeling, there is, on the British side, some genuine doubt about Russian intentions. Considering the way we have treated the U.S.S.R. may it not be, say some realists, that Russia in a war would treat us as they fear we should treat the U.S.S.R? To which the U.S.S.R. replies that they have helped the victims of aggression in China and Spain, while we have helped the aggressors, and that, anyway, if we value Polish and Rumanian help more than a Russian alliance, Stalin need not worry. He can comfortably retire into neutrality and continue to build up his own strongly nationalist Socialism. For Britain the issue is very different. Her one strong card is that a successful Nazi war in the West would mean a Nazi Europe which would be a menace to the U.S.S.R. In fact, the alliance is needed by both parties. Yet it is not Russia which is coming cap in hand to Britain, but a frightened Britain which is beginning to repent of her folly. The assumptions of our ruling class that they are immune from the catastrophies that overwhelm Continental nations, the deep class prejudices that led them to a suicidal complicity in Franco's conquest of Spain—these anachronistic follies are not shared abroad. British people who wish to wake up to the realities might well read two recent books which would give them some notion of their situation. Mr. G. T. Garratt's *Gibraltar and the Mediterranean* may upset their complacency over their past and open their eyes to the actual position of the Rock which they have sometimes seemed in their boasting to have confused with the Rock of Ages. The second book is Mr. Lewis Mumford's *Men Must Act*, which is a stirring appeal by an American to the United States to stand up to Nazi Germany before it is too late. Mr. Mumford assumes that Britain and France may before long either have surrendered or been defeated by the Axis, and calls upon the United States to stop the advance of Hitler in Europe. He envisages a war in which Germany will use the resources and navies of Britain and France against the United States. Exactly in the terms which people in Britain used in calling upon Britain and France to stand by Czechoslovakia last September. In the eyes of many Americans Britain and France to-day seem by their own fault to have placed themselves much in the position of Czechoslovakia last summer.

Mr. Roosevelt himself seems ready to respond to such an appeal as Mr. Mumford's, but he cannot, even if he wishes, pledge American support in case of war. He can, however, take action to safeguard the interests of the United States and the lives of American citizens, and these actions by the Chief Executive may have far-reaching and even decisive effects in preventing a war, or in swinging the balance to the democratic side if war occurs. The movement of the American fleet announced in plain terms that the President will prevent Japan exploiting the difficulties of Britain and France in the Far East if they should become involved in a war in the West. In protecting American interests the United States navy would be automatically protecting those of Britain and France and would enable their fleets to operate in other waters. Japan is, in any

Gibraltar and the Mediterranean. By G. T. Garratt. *Cape.* 10s. 6d.
Men Must Act. By Lewis Mumford. *Secker & Warburg.* 3s. 6d.

case, on the retreat in China, and Hitler must know that the third partner of the Axis is now a weak ally. All reports agree on the rapid advance of the Chinese and on the growing discontent in Japan; statements are openly made in Tokyo that Japan cannot allow the war to continue until next winter. Mr. Roosevelt could have taken no action so likely to deter the Axis powers from further acts of aggression.

The third event was Mr. Roosevelt's letter to the Dictators. It was essentially the kind of appeal which we have constantly begged the British Prime Minister to make before the situation became as dangerous as it is to-day. It demanded in the most explicit terms a pledge from Germany and Italy not to commit further acts of aggression, and even went so far as to specify all the different countries on whom aggression might be contemplated. This based the appeal to Germany and Italy on a sound principle. At the same time, it held the door wide open to the Fascist Powers if they were willing to negotiate peaceably. It emphasised that no policy of encirclement was intended, and that no war would be made on Germany from any quarter. This was the truth and the truth which, above everything, the German people need to know and which Dr. Goebbels wants to stop them knowing. If Germany ever is "encircled," she will have encircled herself by producing terror among her neighbours. It is clear that this appeal could not be kept from the German people, and Hitler is summoning the Reichstag to hear his answer. We must anticipate a fierce denunciation of Mr. Roosevelt as a successor to President Wilson dabbling in European politics which do not concern him, and an appeal to the world public to support Fascism against what Hitler will represent as an unsavoury alliance between democracy and Bolshevism. It may well be an effective harangue as addressed to the German people. But Hitler will, it is believed, make alternative proposals. Probably he will offer to discuss the future of Europe with Britain and France if the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. are excluded. In this way he will hope to recapture the initiative and put the onus of refusal on Britain and France. The answer should be that we are perfectly ready to discuss anything, to make proposals ourselves for the internationalisation of colonial territories and for economic readjustments, but that we could only do so if the other great Powers are included and the interests of all parties considered. What Hitler wants, and what some people in Britain and France may be too ready to concede, is another Munich on a grand scale, which would give Italy and Germany the hegemony they seek and only increase the threat to our independence. If there is to be a conference, as all sane men must hope, there must be equality of determination and power between the parties who confer.

BALKAN RETROSPECT

IT was at Serajevo that the last world-war began, with the murder of an Archduke. What was it that started a little further to the South, when the Duce's tanks and bombers crossed the narrows of the Adriatic and murdered a nation? It was on the Macedonian front, when Bulgaria's armies crumpled and broke, that the beginning of the end came in that world-war—for the collapse of Germany became inevitable when one by one her Eastern allies fell away and made each its separate surrender. And this time, as the two coalitions struggle, half-conscious, into being, in which camp does Bulgaria stand? Once more the pivot of our destinies may lie in the shifting sands of these Balkan kingdoms.

Peering as best I could into the future, I found myself reviewing a dim procession of unknown kings and statesmen the Carols and the Pauls, the Metaxas and the Tsvetkovitchs. But all I knew of them was guesswork and at second hand, for it is many years since I have visited the Balkan Peninsula. Then, as I mused, something awakened from the shadows of memory. Once upon a time, before the war, I did know these Balkan peoples; in some of these mountains I was familiar with every bridle-path, and there were villages in which I was at home in every house. Forgotten friends began to talk to me. Some have died, in battle or in bed, some are in exile; but they and their sons and their kinsmen are still the Balkan peoples. On them in the last resort, and not on the kings and princes, our fate and that of Europe may depend. The oddity about all these men who revisited my memory was that none of them was in his inner mind what he seemed to the outer view.

The first of them was a minor feudal chieftain from Southern Albania. At a time when I was trying, as the agent of a British relief fund, to succour some hundred and fifty rebellious Bulgarian villages which the Turks had sacked and burned, I was his reluctant guest for a night. I entered his house in the belief that he was an enemy, for he was a Mohammedan, and as I supposed a loyal supporter of Turkish misrule. I recollect my impatience as I sat through an interminable banquet. His clansmen stood round the table, tall highlanders each in his pleated kilt of white linen. For two hours or more each held a torch with outstretched arm which he never withdrew or relaxed. The banquet ended, the Bey took me apart and we talked quietly, for each of us could babble in bad Greek. I soon realised that he was not a pillar of Turkish rule, but an Albanian, groping after liberty and the restoration of his suppressed nationality. His devotion to Islam was, moreover, dubious and nominal. He belonged, like most Southern Albanians, to the heretical Bektashi sect. It would take too long to expound what I half know and half suspect about the gracious creed of these mystics. For practical purposes it may suffice to say that they always preach and often practise the brotherhood of man. I knew a Bektashi monastery in Crete which sheltered Christian fugitives during a hideous massacre organised by the Turks. My Bey took me into his courtyard and there, safe and sound under his protection, were some of my Bulgarian villagers. He had opened his gates to the enemy race, fed them and sheltered them till the danger had passed.

My second spectral visitor was a Turkish captain of artillery. He commanded a mounted escort of fifty men which clattered after me wherever I went. Nominally their duty was to protect my life; in reality they had to spy upon me and keep me out of mischief. At first my relations with the captain were distant and suspicious. But he, too, was an Albanian and he too talked Greek. I grew friendly towards him, as I noted his chivalry and humanity towards the Bulgarian peasant women of my villages—for he gave his warm clothes to a sick and shivering girl. One night as we lay sleepless in a deserted church his last reserve broke down. He trusted me and told me the whole secret of the Young Turk conspiracy, which at that time had enlisted all the younger and abler men among the officers of the army quartered in Macedonia and Albania. A year later it broke into open revolt and Abdul Hamid was driven from the throne of his ancestors.

After him there came in this ghostly procession a very different type, a worker. He was a railway guard, on the line that ran between Salonica and Monastir. He had done me some rather risky services by carrying letters for me against the rules, and I had had to intervene to save him from the attentions of the Turkish police. In gratitude he introduced me one day to his club in Salonica. My man was a typical Greek, handsome, articulate and relatively well-educated. To my amazement half or more of his comrades in this workers' club turned out to be Bulgarians. The reader will not realise

what this miracle meant. But at this time rival bands of Greek and Bulgarian comitadjis lay in wait for each other in every mountain pass, and each would fall with bomb and bayonet in ruthless fury on the villages of the other race. But in this club they sat together and professed a common doctrine of international Socialism. They had got beyond the squalid racial quarrels that made of this beautiful country a passable imitation of Hell. We talked, I remember, about Jean Jaurès and his doctrine of nationality—for that great man had not yet been murdered.

My next visitor was a Bulgarian reserve officer, who had fought as a major through the two Balkan wars. It was much later that I met him—in 1913. He was still in uniform and a smell of powder, so to speak, hung about him. He told me from the inside how on that occasion also the Bulgarian army had collapsed. It was, if I could believe him, a ferment of doubt that had worked in the ranks. No one trusted King Ferdinand, and everyone guessed that this simple nation of peasant farmers was the pawn of Kaisers and Tsars. My major had read Tolstoy, and as he talked he unfastened his sword-belt and flung it from him, vowing as he did so that he would never fight again. The same doubts, I reflected, must have sapped the resistance of this same Bulgarian army, five years later, in the Great War, when it lost its will to fight on the same Macedonian front, near Doiran.

Thereafter, they crowded upon me, these Bulgarian acquaintances of mine, some from Macedonia and some from the kingdom. I recalled a visit paid on a single afternoon to two secondary schools in Monastir. In the Greek gymnasium the boys were learning to recite an oration of Demosthenes by heart. In the Bulgarian school the lads of the same age were reading Tolstoy in Russian. He was not the last influence from the focus of Slav thought that swept over this country. My next visitor was a Bulgarian Communist exile. He told me of the savage suppression of his party in the early years that followed the Revolution. It has been driven underground, but there was a time when it was the dominant force among the peasants of the kingdom. It cannot have vanished totally to-day, though it is a Fascist military clique that holds power by a precarious tenure round King Boris. From that obstinate peasantry, with its odd interest in speculative thinking, came one of the few notable personal forces of our day—Dimitrov of the Reichstag trial.

Where, then, will Bulgaria stand, as the armies of the two allied groups muster for the coming trial of strength, be it bloody or bloodless? No one, I venture to say, in Downing Street or in the Wilhelmstrasse, can predict it. They can deal with the figureheads they know—the kings, the generals and the venal ministers. These can be bought or terrorised. But underneath them is the inarticulate Bulgaria of the red-tiled peasant farm-houses, festooned with maize cobs, peppers and tobacco leaves. In some of them the young men have read Lenin, while their elders recollect Tolstoy. At the word of command they may don their uniforms obediently. But as I recall the uncensored history of those three wars, I am not sure that they will remain obedient cannon-fodder to the end.

Downing Street, if it is far-sighted, will pay some attention, late though it may be, to this Bulgarian problem. Thanks to King Ferdinand's megalomania, as brilliant as it was insane, this little country was harshly used, as much by its neighbours as by the greater victors. It had to abandon to the Serbs its kinsmen in Macedonia. They have been forcibly denationalised and crushed, as no other minority in Europe has been crushed, unless it be the Germans of the South Tirol. It had to surrender to the Rumanians the Bulgarian region of the Dobrudja at the Danube's mouth. It never received the often promised port on the Aegean shores. Something could still be done, by remedying these grievances, to wean official Bulgaria from the Axis and to win her for a Balkan bloc pledged to mutual defence. An outlet to the Aegean is indispensable. If the Serbs and Croats should come to terms, Jugoslavia ought to adopt a federal structure. In that event both the Slavs of Macedonia and the still more unfortunate Albanians of Old Servia should find their place as units in the federal plan. Unless spontaneously her neighbours are ready to go half-way to meet Bulgaria's grievances, it is fatally certain that she will adhere to the Axis, which will expand her territory gladly, while it enslaves her, body and soul.

So much the most conventional diplomatist can understand—as some understood it during the World War. But if we had at our head in this struggle a popular leadership, it is something wholly different that it would offer to the Balkan peoples. It would ignore the corrupt statesmen and the trembling kings. It would see below them my heretic Albanian bey, my chivalrous Albanian captain, my Tolstoyan major of the Bulgarian infantry, my Socialist railway guard from Salonica. It would search boldly for some "ideological" appeal that could unite them. It would not be content merely to oppose the Axis on the plane of power-politics; it would undertake the defence of democracy. It would, I think, reject the senseless and fanatical territorial nationalism that has soaked this Peninsula in blood. It would be content to promise respect for each of the languages of this mixed region, and for the culture that clings to language. Above all, I think it would offer to promote the old ideal of a Balkan Federation within a resurrected League. If these peoples are to range themselves loyally on our side, it must be for something better than the miserable *status quo*. But for such leadership we look in vain.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

IS THE PUBLIC TO BLAME?

DURING the past eighteen months politicians and the politically conscious minority have been engrossed in international politics to the exclusion of everything else. During that time we have had three major crises, the resignation of Eden and the Anschluss, Munich and March 15th, and a bewildering series of changes in governmental policy. First Mr. Eden, widely regarded as a "good" man, is sacked, then Mr. Chamberlain becomes the man of peace and with his umbrella defeats the forces of war and brings back from Munich "peace with honour" and reconciliation between England and Germany, to be followed by reconciliation with Italy. But simultaneously rearmament is speeded up and appeals are made for national service. Then, suddenly, after March 15th Hitler and Mussolini are transformed into bogies, and Mr. Chamberlain becomes a man guaranteeing countries "of whom we have scarcely heard," with kind words for Russia, and practising virtues which he had previously ignored.

How has the British public reacted to these complex tergiversations? The short answer is "with sheer bewilderment," and the politicians would do well to realise the fact and to blame not the public but themselves. How can a people whose education stops at 14 be expected to follow political changes with understanding and sympathy and be enthusiastic to-day for a policy which was condemned five weeks ago?

Only if we bear this in mind are the figures intelligible which Mass-observation has collected in the last few weeks. The experiment was made of a house-to-house canvas in Fulham, covering exactly the same ground as in the by-election precisely a year ago. The canvasses took place in the same week of April in the two successive years, and therefore give an indication of the changes in public opinion effected by a year in which a Government elected on a slogan of collective security has been through the whole parabola of Isolation, Desolation, Insulation and back to Selective Security.

Here, in brief, are the facts.

In 1938 31 per cent. had thought Foreign Affairs at least as important as Home. In 1939 this had decreased to 21 per cent. Within these figures, in 1938 16 per cent. thought Foreign Affairs *more* important; in 1939 this had decreased to 12 per cent. And 15 per cent. in 1938 thought Home and Foreign Affairs of *equal* importance; in 1939 the figure for this category was 9 per cent.

The majority, 53 per cent., thought Home Affairs alone mattered in 1938. In 1939 this had increased to 59 per cent.

Thus, in the past year of Foreign Affairs predominance, more of the adult population of Fulham had lost relative interest in them. As swings in public opinion go, this one is spectacular and unusually consistent. It is the exact opposite of "what might be expected" and of that assumption on which political leaders have increasingly worked. It shows the failure of our leaders in leading the mass. I would emphasise that the data, though covering no more than a thousand homes, are particularly reliable because gathered in *exactly* the same way, by the same interviewers, at the same houses. And the results are confirmed by all Mass-observation work done in recent months. The result of the bewildering changes in the international situation is not to stimulate a wider interest in foreign affairs (though it does stimulate an increased interest with the minority) but rather to make many persons increasingly retreat from the awful reality into greater preoccupation with private life, with cultivating their gardens—unless they happen to be among the millions who have not got gardens, in which case cultivating their littlewoods is the better metaphor.

Thus similarly there has been an increase of only 4 per cent. in those Fulhamites expecting war during the past year. But there has been an increase of 13 per cent. in those who do not care or know what to think or expect about war.

In 1938 28 per cent. were entirely satisfied with Chamberlain's Foreign Policy.

In 1939 28 per cent. were entirely satisfied with Chamberlain's Foreign Policy—by now quite a different one.

But whereas in 1938 40 per cent. were vague, doubtful or bewildered as to what policy to approve, in 1939 55 per cent. were ditto, i.e., 15 per cent. more Fulhamites had become bewildered.

The events of the past year have enlarged only one part of the political horizon for the masses—bewilderment. For those millions who do not understand maps and have no passport, the whole thing seems largely crazy. If their leaders cannot do anything, who can? The world seems a chain of remotely connected pacts and panics. As a typical Fulham woman put it last week, "I hope we are not going to have a war. We *must* hope we are not going to. That is all we can hope, and it won't help us anyway, will it? I don't know. You know I am not up in politics to answer anything." The words of most answers did not vary perceptibly after one year. Heavily increased is the opinion voiced by a Fulham man this year: "It is hard to give an opinion on anything at the present time. You have only got the newspaper."

The papers (whose interest is in profit-making and not in the general good) have perhaps more than any other agency helped to develop bewilderment—a bewilderment which often leads to apathy or defeatism. Beaverbrook's *Express* has sent a two-million circulation soaring and advertisements booming by saying to people day after day that what happens in a European country is no Britisher's business. Howling "No War," the *Express* has cashed in extensively on people's wishful thinking. But the ultimate effect is different. Such insistent propaganda urges people to carry on, to cultivate their littlewoods, and to ignore relevant external situations. It does not stimulate a state of mind where people, seeing their hopes or liberties threatened, volunteer for A.R.P.

The *Express* branded those who have mentioned the grave dangers (some of them since realised) as Jitterbugs. It has dropped the word from its vocabulary now.

Similarly the Rothermere press acclaimed Hitler as our friend, a man of honour, and a great gentleman. It now leads the growing force of militant anti-Germanism.

These changes of "opinion" cannot, of course, escape the notice of that minority of working people who still read editorials or unpleasant news.

All the consequences are to be seen in Fulham. And in this respect it is an ideal borough, for it has one of the best A.R.P. recruiting figures in the country. Fulham has an exceptionally high degree of citizenship and social conscience. What one finds there, what one finds of apathy, despair, and democratic ignorance, is multiplied elsewhere. Our similar surveys in the East End and in Lancashire are more striking. It seems to me, I must say, from all the facts that we have collected, that the spirit of the mass of our countrymen at the moment is rather defeatist and depressed, because basically bewildered, and I think that a very large factor in causing this, one which politicians themselves ignore, is failure to state the facts of national diplomacy at the earliest possible moments, and to see that those facts immediately obtain unbiased and universal dissemination.

And they must be put across in language which everyone can understand. Not the formal prose of the National Service Handbook, or Sir John Anderson's scholarly introductions, or Chamberlain's aldermanic broadcasts. Each person must be made to understand what *is* happening to him or her. We have seen in the Bridgwater by-election that a man who has spent his life making himself understood to the millions, can put across (under the worst possible conditions) the gravest issues of Foreign Affairs, and win an election on accurate interpretation of those issues almost exclusively. Unless our citizens can be stimulated to take a far deeper and more conscious interest, the results may well be serious. Things like conscription do not answer anything in the long run, for what is so ambiguously known as the "spirit of the country"—i.e., our ability to stand up for ourselves and not give in to force—depends in the long run on the will of each individual, what he thinks is worth while, and how long he can go on thinking so. The fact that people have rather retreated from reality in the past year does not at all mean that that is the only thing they can do; nor does it mean they are stupid or hopeless. Not at all. A leadership that understood what was going on, and how to give men confidence, could have a very different effect. And have it immediately.

TOM HARRISSON

A LONDON DIARY

THERE never was such a diplomatic scramble. On the morning of the 13th, when Parliament was recalled for the afternoon to hear Mr. Chamberlain's speech, the Cabinet had still not decided to guarantee Rumania. An S.O.S. from King Carol made some decision necessary. Labour members, who have been pressing the Government behind the scenes recently, saw the Prime Minister before the Cabinet meeting and urged him to give the guarantee and to bring in Russia. It was not until the Prime Minister actually gave the promise in his speech that the Rumanian Ambassador in the House knew that his country was to be guaranteed. It is said that an arrangement was made for a white handkerchief to be waved out of a window of the House of Commons as a signal that the pledge had been given. A Rumanian waiting outside picked up the signal and promptly telephoned through. It was an odd parliamentary blunder on Mr. Chamberlain's part not even to mention Russia in his speech until he was heckled towards the end of it by the Opposition. He might have got away with a mere phrase about doing his best to co-operate with the U.S.S.R. But the result of "forgetting the U.S.S.R." was an increased scepticism about the sincerity of the Government's collective security policy, and it was noticeable that the attitude of the Government actually changed during the course of the Debate. People forget that Mr. Chamberlain and Sir John Simon are first and foremost party politicians. The one thing that really impresses them is a change of mood in the House of Commons. At the end of the Debate Dr. Dalton put a formidable case and asked some awkward questions. He elicited, to most people's surprise, a statement from Sir John Simon that the Government was not "in principle" opposed to a military alliance with the U.S.S.R. This was thought to be going a long way for Sir John; but I wonder if there is anything that that disingenuous advocate would not promise so long as it was coupled by the magic safeguard "in principle"?

You will remember that after the British guarantee for Poland, a Reuter's message and a *Times* leader threw doubt on the scope of the guarantee. It is a fact that on the night that Colonel Beck was starting for England he heard of these assumed reservations and rang up the British Ambassador in Warsaw at midnight to tell him that he was "unpacking his bag." The British Minister at once rang up London and got Lord Halifax at his own house at 2 o'clock in the morning. Lord Halifax was in bed, but sufficiently awake on the 'phone to assure the British Minister that Colonel Beck need have no qualms and that the British guarantee was real. Colonel Beck came to London. We do not know what Mr. Chamberlain said to him, or how far Polish opinion will go in permitting negotiations or concessions to the Nazis. The cry is that they will have no "Runcimanades." Danzig makes a most difficult point, for it is already mainly under German control, and can be quickly taken over at any time by the Nazis from East Prussia. In spite of assurances to the contrary, I cannot believe that if Hitler made this coup the Poles would invade German soil, which would be their only remedy; and yet they know that the occupation of Danzig City and its surrounding territory would nearly close the top end of the Corridor and would mean further encirclement of Poland. If Danzig, which is now demilitarised, is fortified by Germany, its guns would command Gdynia.

* * *

I was not surprised the other day to hear of a lady who refused to agree with her friends, backing her optimism with "I'm pinning my faith to Old Moore; there won't be a war." Obviously when chaos baffles reasonable calculation people will fall back on unreasonable alarms and reassurances. One singular example of this is the recent popularity of astrology. The knowing ones in the press have been quick to see that it may be good business to say that there won't be war next week or next month, or that Tuesday is a good day for shopping (the bargain adverts. are in the next column) or that Wednesday is the right day for bulls or bears. All this is only important as a symptom of the growing unreason—to be compared with the growth of superstitious cults in Germany before the Nazis made superstition compulsory. When it becomes terrifying is when one learns (and this is not gossip) that Hitler regularly consults astrologers and acts on their advice. Years ago he learnt from his horoscope that March and September were his good months, and that 1940 was dangerous to him. One wishes one also knew whether 1939 is altogether a good year for him, or only March and—I suppose—September. In thinking over non-superstitious forecasts, I am reminded of *The Shape of Things to Come* in which H. G. Wells hits on 1940 as the year in which the world war begins and makes it start from an incident in the Polish Corridor when a Nazi begins the trouble because he thinks a Pole, who is trying to get his false teeth unstuck, is making faces at him.

* * *

The following incident is taken from a French Riviera paper, *Le Petit Niçois*. One of the most distinguished Florentine families was the Ascolis, but they happened to fall under Mussolini's new racial laws. As a result Professor Ascoli, one of the leading Italian specialists, was forced to resign all his official positions, and Admiral Ascoli was retired from the Navy. Finally Colonel Ascoli was forced to leave the Army, but permitted to say goodbye to his battalion on the parade ground. After a short farewell speech, he covered his head with the regimental colours and blew his brains out.

* * *

A friend who spent Easter week in Poitiers, at one of those excellent conferences organised by the International Student Service, gives a most interesting account of the discussions of the political situation with Americans, British, French, Hungarian, Rumanians and representatives of most of the smaller democracies. Just six years ago, in April, 1933, he had been at a similar conference in Leyden, when the first Nazi delegation arrived to preach their racial creed. On that occasion the conference broke up in disorder when the Rector refused to tolerate the leading Nazi within the walls of the University. Would he dare to do that now? At Poitiers the issue was not raised as there were no German representatives, and inevitably much of the discussions was concerned with democracy and war, and in particular with conscription. On this point it is difficult for an Englishman to reply, when the Swiss argue that compulsory military service is the safeguard of their democracy. "You see," one delegate said, "the Czechs were betrayed by their politicians. But we can't be because we keep our arms and kit at home. No one can stop us defending our freedom." There seems to be a fundamental difference between democracies based on the fighting tradition of the people's army and countries like England, where the absence of foreign danger has developed a pacific creed of civil liberties, and enabled the army to remain the preserve of the ruling class. It is easy enough to explain why we hate conscription and why it is at the moment impracticable, but such explanations do not soften the French jibe: "You wish to defend British freedom with the bodies of French citizens." The resistance to compulsion is very strong in this country. But I believe a compulsory register—i.e., an allocation of functions in war time, would be readily accepted if a reconstructed Government began by seriously dealing with profiteering (which is as bad as ever though better disguised through sub-contracting) and announced its plans for taking over industry and organising it on an emergency basis.

* * *

The French mood is one of unquestioning national unity. They have no interest in party politics or ideologies and do not really wish to discuss politics at all. All they are now concerned with is the defence of France. Perhaps the most moving speech of the conference came from a Frenchman who said: "In September we decided to give up our European position in order to avoid war. We took Hitler at his word, and, in return for a peaceful life behind our own frontiers, we were prepared to let him expand. We ceased to be a Great Power for the sake of peace, but this sacrifice has been proved vain. Even now he won't let us alone—and so we shall fight." The headlines in French papers confirm this analysis. "Chamberlain guarantees Rumania and Greece" in big letters, and underneath "Daladier concurs." If war comes France will fight more passionately than ever before, not for hegemony or empire (no Frenchman mentions the Empire) but for the soil of a second-class Power. And Hitler, in that case, will have precipitated that war *after* France has surrendered far more than Bismarck ever dreamt of winning.

* * *

Tuesday's *Times* reports a sentence of one month's imprisonment on a husband and wife for cruelty to a dog. The chairman of the Enfield Bench (Mrs. Hood) said:

> "We think you have been most cruel in starving this dog practically to death." When Bates said, "What about my children?" Mrs. Hood replied that he must see about someone to look after them.

Well, care for animals is notoriously one of the pleasant traits of the British people, and I agree that those who lock up a dog and starve it until you can "count the bones in its body" should be punished. Above all, they should never be allowed to keep an animal again. But does it really do any good to shut up a man and woman for a month for such an offence, and what is the effect on their children?

* * *

"This 'ere crisis," said a tradesman to me, "just won't do, it upsets trade." The bravest attempt I've seen to counteract the unfavourable effects of Hitler comes from a tailor who has a notice in his window saying that:

> The proprietors of this business are so convinced that *war is not imminent* that they agree to refund all monies paid in respect of suits ordered now. If this country is at war in Europe within one month from this date (13th April) all such suits will be given free of charge. Tell that to the Jitterbugs.

Great. If there is no war, that's fine: if there is one gets a new suit free, and that's fine too.

Overheard: "Well, I'm now on the reserved list of occupations and my home is officially in a neutral area. It will be practically a foul if Hitler does anything to me!"

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Mr. L. Hamilton

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Herr Hitler has one of the endearing characteristics of Ferdinand the Bull. Just when the crowds expect him to be most violent he stops and smells the flowers. I have a feeling, and I hope I am right, that for the next month or so Herr Hitler is going to take things a little easier and smell the flowers and listen to the nightingales.

Our policy should be to encourage him to go on developing the aesthetic side of his nature.—Beverley Nichols in *Sunday Graphic*.

And the use of the word "'phone" by a woman not of the flapper-carrier class leaps uncomfortably to the ear.—*Times*.

Lord Halifax, replying to the debate, said we should run the risk of making a profound and dangerous miscalculation of Spanish policy in future if we were to start from the basic assumption that it was likely to be conducted by consideration for anything but purely Spanish interests.

"I have never believed, and I do not believe to-day," he stated, "that it is the least likely that whoever is responsible for the Government of Spain will fail to pursue a purely Spanish policy independently of any outside foreign influence."—*News Chronicle*.

An enormous amount of historical research has gone to the preparation of the film. Even the underwear of the Old Guard (which you will not see, of course) is absolutely correct.—*Daily Herald*.

When Robert McCreath, of Richmond Street, Glasgow, was told yesterday that his wife had just had her 20th child, a boy, he went straight away to join an anti-aircraft unit of the Territorials.

"A family like mine needs defending and I'm not standing by and let others do it for me," says Mr. McCreath.—*Daily Express*.

Several members of Cardiff Parks Committee yesterday stood in silence in memory of Billy, the Victoria Park seal, which died last week.

While the City Fathers were paying due tribute to the dead the scientists of the National Museum of Wales discovered that for thirty years Billy had been deceiving Cardiff.

For Billy was not a male seal, as every one believed, but a female.

Now they are wondering whether they should change her name posthumously before she is stuffed and put in the natural history section.—*Daily Express*.

FREE—Chart giving Scriptural proof Golden Age commences 1942. Send 1½*d*. stamp.—Advt. in *Yorkshire Post*.

But for the Albanian affair Mr. Chamberlain would have probably landed his first salmon of the year.—*Sphere*.

There has been no possibility during this week to think of anything but horses. Our hunt point-to-point takes place to-day.—*Daily Mail*.

FRAYED NERVES

"IF it's got to come," said the elderly newsboy from whom I buy my evening papers, "better git it over. No use lettin' it go on gittin' on people's nerves." He was referring to the international situation and the possibility of a world war, but I could not help wondering as I left him whether, if the international situation were as calm as a stagnant pond, something else would not be getting on people's nerves instead. The age of nerves, it seems to me, began about the time of Wagner, or at least became firmly established about then, and, ever since he first excited the nerves of Europe with his music, men and women have had to flock in greater and greater numbers to the chemists' shops in search of nerve-tonics and sedatives.

No doubt, human beings were always irritable. Poets have had the reputation of being so for centuries. But the disease seems to me to have spread in the past century or so till, both in public and private life, the first thing masses of people do on getting up in the morning is to look out for something to be irritated by. There was an interesting example of superfluous irritability in the *Times* the other day, when a correspondent wrote: "Three times already this spring the hardy annual, 'Summer is icumen in' has cropped up with the usual wrong implication. Will you, Sir, of your goodness, and in the sacred causes of decency, accuracy, humanity, and frayed nerves, proclaim aloud to the world in tones befitting the mouthpiece of 'Thunderer,' even as Jupiter Tonans himself, that the above words do not mean that summer is coming in, but that summer has arrived." Obviously, the correspondent wrote in a more or less humorous frame of mind, but it is equally obvious that he is one of those people who are exasperated by the innocent ineptitude of their fellows in their use of hackneyed quotations from the poets. To me it seems that we should applaud a man who, in the simplicity of his heart, on hearing the first cuckoo, writes to a newspaper announcing "Summer is icumen in." Manifestly, he means well. No murderer would write like that—no robber of the widow and orphan. And, after all, whatever the line may have meant to the poet who wrote it, it has come to mean something different—and just as good—to ninety-nine out of a hundred of the people who quote it to-day. Just as the meanings of individual words change, so the meanings of quotations borrowed from the poets change. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin" does not mean the same thing to the modern sentimentalist that it meant to Shakespeare. To the modern sentimentalist it is a statement of our common humanity: to Shakespeare it was only a statement of our common mortality. Surely, we who believe in progress should welcome the adaptation of literature to the needs of a new age. Nothing can stand still in this evolving world. I cannot help thinking that the poets themselves would have been pleased by the thought that their words would be used by succeeding generations in all sorts of senses of which they never dreamed. Goldsmith's nerves, I am sure, would not have been frayed if he had foreseen that his line, "The loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind" would be found by posterity a perfect description of the opposite thing to what he had meant to say.

Lovers of exactness, however, are easily exasperated. It is said that even Members of Parliament, never at the best of times a brood of intellectuals, used to be intolerant of a false quantity in a Latin quotation. I know a man who loses his temper if he sees in a paper a misquotation from the French, as he declares, for example, *à l'outrance* to be. He can scarcely bear to remain in a restaurant if he sees *hors d'oeuvres* spelt with a final "s" on the menu. I have often tried to calm him by reminding him how agreeable are French misquotations and misspellings of English. Musical comedy audiences in England, I point out, used to laugh their ribs sore when a Frenchman on the stage referred to "the green-eyed monster" as "the green-eyed lobster." All mistakes in speech should be classified as howlers, and appreciated as such. A man would surely be unfit for the post of schoolmaster whose nerves, instead of being refreshed, were frayed by howlers.

The best advice I ever heard to people with easily frayed nerves was that of the old tram-conductor to the young tram-conductor who was irritated by the stupidity of passengers: "Bottle it up." We are told nowadays that repressions are dangerous: it will probably be discovered in twenty years' time that they are the surest safeguard to human happiness. The occasions of which one feels least proud on looking back over one's life are the occasions on which one has been irri-

tated and shown that one was irritated. Imagine what lives we should lead if we did not repress our natural irritation again and again between cockcrow and cockcrow. Many people, as a matter of fact, do begin the day's course of irritability at cockcrow, and would gladly strangle those lusty singers who, they believe, are keeping them awake. I doubt, however, whether anybody ever got asleep any sooner for cursing poultry. Still, if you are irritable everything will irritate you. How murderous you can feel, for example, when the early postman bangs on the door just as you are about to fall asleep! Telephone calls are even more irritating. The postman, at least, can be forgiven, for he is only doing his duty. There is no such excuse for the early morning telephone. Even then, however, it is better to "bottle it up." If the man at the other end of the line, instead of asking if it is you or saying who he is, inquires: "What is your number?" there is no use in shouting abuse at him. Even if, when you have told him your number, he goes on to ask suspiciously, "Who is speaking?" it is foolish to tell him what you think of him in contemporary English. To do so will hurt you more than it hurts him, for he is obviously too thick-skinned to be sensitive to the lash of mere words. But even worse than he is the man who, having rung you up, discovers that he has got a wrong number, and, without an apology, angrily orders you to ring off. Him, if I had my way when my nerves are frayed, I would give a year in Dartmoor.

Telephone temper, I have been told, is a fairly common nervous disease, and not very long ago a young man in a telephone kiosk became so infuriated by not being able to get through on a toll call that he banged the receiver down on to the transmitter with such venom as to smash it. Thereby he lost not only his temper, but the money the magistrate ordered him to pay as a penalty.

Perhaps, it is the invention of machines—which are supposed to make life easier for us—that has chiefly contributed to the modern increase of frayed nerves. Give a man a machine, and he becomes more irritable than he would have been without a machine. So far as my experience goes, for example, motorists are a more irritable race than pedestrians. Even if one pedestrian runs into another pedestrian, it is quite usual to see them both apologising with a smile. On the other hand, even if one motorist does not run into another motorist, but misses him by a few inches, it is by no means uncommon to hear both of them shouting angrily at each other: "Fool," "Why don't you learn to drive?" and even worse—much worse—things.

Apart from machines, human beings do make some slight effort to control their nerves. The clergyman must often wish he had a gun in the pulpit when the most moving passages in his sermon are constantly interrupted by the coughing of a parishioner suffering from alcoholic catarrh. Yet, I think, no English clergyman has ever shot a parishioner for coughing. Musicians, again, must frequently be irritated to the point of murder by their audiences, but even Sir Thomas Beecham has never used a more lethal weapon than his tongue on a talkative occupant of the stalls. Self-restraint has become characteristic of the professional life. Professional men, however, have at least the consoling knowledge that they are paid for being irritated. I doubt whether any doctor could listen without screaming to the long recital of an imaginary invalid's symptoms if it were not for the thought of the fee that would come after.

Even when we are not paid for being irritated, however, it pays to "bottle it up." I know a man, for example, who becomes intensely irritated if a woman sitting beside him at a dinner-party keeps letting her napkin or handkerchief fall to the floor. He does not tell her how furious he feels, however. He knows that if he told such women what he thought of them, and assailed them with all the epithets that plead in his brain for utterance, he would soon cease to be asked out to dinner. Hence, he stoops courteously to the floor and with a smile restores the napkin or the handkerchief, leaving the impression that to keep dropping such things is an addition to feminine charm. It is the only thing to do in this world. Other people are irritating chiefly because we allow ourselves to become irritated; and, when we allow ourselves to become irritated, we can become irritated by anything, from a lost timetable to a whistling boy. Or even by someone's quoting "Summer is icumen in" with a wrong implication. I speak, I may say, as one of the irritable, but how in so being I have wasted my time!

Y. Y.

JUGOSLAVIA

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT]

POINTEDLY omitted from Mr. Chamberlain's system of Eastern European guarantees, Jugoslavia seems to be indicated as one of the next victims of Axis aggression. But with her 15,000,000 inhabitants and considerable economic resources, she could still play an independent part in international politics if she could only unite her nationalities in defence of their common freedom. Unfortunately, apart from the Germans, Hungarians and Albanians (each numbering about half-a-million) whose loyalty is anyway suspect, even the Slavonic peoples are deeply divided. Two million Slovenians, in the district dividing German Austria from the sea, speak a language distinct from Serbo-Croat and are open to Nazi influence, while the Macedonian minority are still a bone of contention with Bulgaria. But it is the Serbo-Croatian conflict which dominates Jugoslav politics; on its speedy solution depends the future existence of the State.

The Croats speak the same language as the Serbs. They are mostly Catholic, while the Serbs are Orthodox, but the Croatian question is not religious, and in fact the peasant movement, the centre of Croatian national feeling, has an anti-clerical tradition. The basis of the national difference is the different historical experience and influences to which the two peoples have been subjected for a thousand years. There is no doubt that to-day both Serbs and Croats are conscious of their nationhood, and that they have different outlooks on life. At the same time, both have a very strong sense of the community of interests of all Southern Slav peoples. This idea is strongest among the peasant masses, who in Croatia, as well as in Serbia, cherish the idea of a Great State which shall stretch from Trieste to the Black Sea, and include Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Macedonians and Bulgars.

The principal problem of Jugoslavia is to create a real unity which shall allow for regional and historical diversities. Since the foundation of the state, the inhabitants of the former Habsburg provinces have suffered from the hegemony of Belgrade. The Croats have always asked for autonomy within the state frontiers. They complained among other things that the taxes raised in Croatia and Dalmatia were spent in Serbia, that the bureaucracy was filled with Serbs, and that Croats doing their military service were sent to distant provinces, while Croatia was garrisoned with Serbian troops. The only solution, they claimed, was administration of Croatia from Zagreb. The different Serbian parties varied in the degree of their hostility to this claim, but agreement was still far off when the Croat leader Radeč was shot in the Parliament in June, 1928. A royal dictatorship was proclaimed six months later. Since then the Croatian problem has been linked with that of political freedom throughout Jugoslavia. The common sufferings of both peoples brought them together, and an Agreement was signed in October, 1937, between Dr. Maček, the successor of Radeč, and the four Serbian oppositional parties, creating a common political programme of federal organisation, political freedom, democratic government and social progress.

The most important political organisation in Croatia is the Croatian Peasant Party. Founded before the war as a class party, it won importance only when the foundation of the Jugoslav state brought universal suffrage. Bourgeois parties survived until the abolition of all parties in 1929. Then the Croatian bourgeoisie, wishing to create a Croatian united front against Belgrade, entered its ranks. It has now a mono-

polistic position in Croatian politics, but it has ceased to be a purely peasant party. The intelligentsia are much more intransigent than the peasants, although the real "sufferings of the Croatian people" are those of the peasants exploited by the ruling class of Belgrade. But the Zagreb bourgeoisie are jealous of the economic domination of Belgrade, and feel that their superior culture should entitle them to the higher posts in the administration which are now held by wealthy Serbs. Among these people Nazi, and especially Clerical-Fascist, ideas are strong. They consider that the recent events are a triumph of Slovak nationalism, and they would be glad to secure their "independence" by the same means.

This rivalry of the two bourgeoisies endangers the security of the Serbian and Croatian peoples, the vast majority of whom have the same social needs and the same interests in face of German aggression. This is understood alike by Opposition and Government. Prince Paul undoubtedly wishes to solve the Croatian question, and he dismissed Stojadinovič in February because the latter was so hated by the Croats that progress was impossible. But he wishes to do it without allowing political liberty in Serbia. Obsessed by terror of "Bolshevism," he is unwilling to make the slightest concession to the democratic sympathies of his people. The new Government has made little change. Dr. Dragoljub Jovanovič, the left Agrarian leader and the first Serbian politician to advocate collaboration with the Croats, has been in prison for six months without substantial cause, and there is little prospect of his release. Since he is unwilling to form a concentration ministry of all Serbian parties, and so, by relaxing police rule, to approach by gradual stages the national problem, Prince Paul is obliged to begin with the question of territorial delimitation between Croatia and Serbia. This is precisely the most difficult question of all, the discussion of which will arouse all the passions of Serbian and Croatian chauvinists, who both claim the whole of the intermediate provinces of Bosnia and Vojvodina. Only after careful preparation, when each side is convinced that the other is sincere and confidence has been created, can it be discussed with hope of success. But if, from fear of democracy, Prince Paul insists on this approach, he may soon provoke a *crise d'état*, in which Germany and Italy would intervene "to restore order." Prince Paul, who accepts personal responsibility for the whole Germanophile policy of the last four years, still trusts the word of his dictatorial friends, and seems oblivious to the danger.

There is no more tragic illusion than the belief that a conflict of interests between Germany and Italy in the Balkans will prevent common action by the Axis. Italy claims a special influence in Dalmatia. By her occupation of Albania she has access to Macedonia. The West side of the Vardar Valley, the route from the Northern Balkans to Salonika, is inhabited largely by Albanians, whose revisionist claims the new master of Tirana may claim to inherit. Italy's share in the eventual division of Eastern Europe could be Dalmatia, Albania, Macedonia, Greece and the greater part of Bulgaria. Germany would claim Slovenia, Slavonia (the plain of the rivers Sava and Drava), the Danubian sections of Serbia and Bulgaria, and the whole of Rumania. There is no reason why Hitler should not allow Italy to dominate the Southern Balkans and the Aegean. There is no reason why Mussolini should oppose German supremacy in the whole Danube basin. The only point at which they would conflict is the small area at the head of the Adriatic between Trieste and Fiume, where Hitler, after annexing Slovenia as a "protectorate," would desire access to the sea. If Mussolini considered the long term strategic interests of his country, he would try to prevent this. But he is concerned only to secure the greatest possible number of prestige successes for his regime. These he cannot obtain from the Western Powers, but Hitler can give him them in abundance, not only in North Africa, but in the Balkans themselves.

Jugoslavia is terribly endangered by the Italian occupation of Albania. She has to fear a simultaneous attack from Germany, Italy and Hungary, possibly from Bulgaria, combined with separatist demagogic propaganda among the extreme groups in Croatia and Macedonia. Yet her peoples are passionately hostile to the Axis and devoted not only to the democratic peoples, but also to their traditional protector Russia, whom their Government has never recognised. The alliance of Jugoslavia in a future war would save a good many British lives. But it can be won only if we realise the difference between the aims of her pro-Fascist rulers and of their democratic subjects.

AFRICA AND THE AFRICANS

TANGANYIKA, I thought on a recent visit, is, in some respects, the Ireland of East Africa. It is divided by many opinions, all of them strong. The British, who have done a great deal to develop the country, would naturally deplore a change of policy breaking the continuity of democratic rule between the Nile and Cape Colony. To them the natural solution of the problem would be some kind of federation including the protectorate of Uganda, the crown colony of Kenya, and mandated Tanganyika. Visionaries, inspired by the Rhodes ideal, contemplate a United States of South and East Africa, stretching from Mombasa to Cape Town, with Dominion status and a federal constitution similar to the Australian.

The Germans of East Africa are by no means united. There is a certain amount of propaganda against the mandate, but the older farmers, some of whom have returned to the lands they owned before the war, are completely out of touch with the Germany of to-day. The majority of them are financed by an agricultural company, and their funds do not permit of European holidays. They are hard-working, and, so long as they remain in the country, prosperous. When they want more assistants, nephews and cousins come out from Germany to join them. In this manner they hear of a system of government in the Fatherland more alien than that under which they live. The younger men with less stake in Tanganyika are sometimes violently Nazi, but, on the whole, the German settlers, growing sisal and coffee, are less concerned with politics than with their present freedom from restrictions and the personal independence which they realise would be impossible under a dictatorship. No doubt they would like to return to a constitutional Germany, but not to the Germany of the secret police.

One of the largest and most modern sisal estates on the coast is owned by a German. It is in every way a model proposition, with its own hospital and school, with bonuses for workers and an admirable insistence on shoes, that gauge of civilisation in the tropics. For the barefoot labourer is liable to hook-worm and other diseases which the import of cheap Japanese shoes has done more to eliminate than the thousands spent on research and public health by German and British Governments.

On this estate a Bavarian planter said to me: "We can get along quicker with our work these days. We don't have to waste time on ceremonies. Before the war, if an official came into my office I had to stand to attention answering questions. Now, if one of your inspectors comes along we go round the plantations together and profit by each other's experience."

From the Government point of view the Germans are admirable settlers because they do not object to advice.

"If I tell a German to plant his crop earlier this year on account of weather or insect conditions, he does it without argument, and gets a bumper harvest in return," said an agricultural officer. "But the Englishman always has a dozen reasons why he should go his own obstinate way and damn the consequences!"

Among the natives of Tanganyika, split into so many tribes that no one chief can exercise paramount power, the only people who regret German rule are the old soldiers accustomed to innumerable privileges under a military system. Deprived

of perquisites and distinction, they dislike being merged in the civil population, whom they can no longer command as they choose. The younger natives rarely differentiate between the foreign races for whom they work, but they are sufficiently prosperous at the moment to dislike the idea of being forced to "make war instead of making new land for crops."

Among the more intelligent tribes land-ownership is increasing. In the fertile northern belt served by the Moshi-Tanga railway, native coffee competes with the European, and it is not unknown for a native farmer to claim protection from the vigilant agricultural authorities against pests spreading from the ill-kept plantations of a white neighbour.

Ruwanda, the mandated territory within the borders of the Belgian Congo, suffers like the rest of that great territory from the prosperity of Belgium, which keeps her sons at home. In earlier years a regrettable number of inefficients found their way to Central Africa, and the development of the Congo was consequently retarded. Lately the Government has sent out many admirable officials, but they are young men without experience, and those I met had not yet learned a native language. Hard-working and full of ideas, but ignorant as yet of the tribal mentalities, they are winning the respect rather than the confidence of the people.

Ruwanda depends on her mines. In these the natives are well-paid, fed and clothed, but they are a pastoral race. As soon as they have earned enough money to buy cows, off they go, with their savings tied in a corner of their cotton wrappings. And they make for the Uganda frontier, because they imagine they will have more freedom under British rule.

All along the road from Butambo, in the mining area, to Rutchuru, we saw a steady stream of migrants, and in spite of the excellently planned villages erected on the Ruwanda hilltops under Belgian supervision, the general appearance of the native was certainly far better in Uganda.

This may be due to the fact that mandated Ruwanda is, as yet, practically unsettled. Apart from the mines and the splendid roads, there is little demand for hired labour. The great dunes roll away, limitless, but empty and uncultivated. The Belgian Government offers free land and unprecedented assistance in its development, but, so far, without much success. The Western Congo, therefore, is still primarily a native concern and the villagers are probably among the least politically minded in Africa. They dislike change, but have a vague idea that across the frontier, under the various kings of Uganda, they might get more privileges and perquisites.

The territories of Ovamboland, Damaraland and Great Namaqualand, generally known as South-West Africa, lying between Portuguese Angola and Cape Colony, are more inclined to politics than the other mandated territories because they are afraid and doubtful about the future. There is a feeling of insecurity, artificially fostered by racial and party politicians. The Germans are uncertain about their standing and their rights. The more active among them are Nazis, openly contemptuous of democracy. They believe in force and have organised an illicit import of arms from Angola.

Their principles prevent them from co-operating with the Union party, who are apt to regard their share of government as a permanent right rather than as a temporary trust, and to aggravate the difficulty of their own position by alternately boycotting and co-operating with the Germans, at one moment demanding more extended local powers, and the next insisting on inclusion in the Union. Here, more than in any other part of mandated Africa, I found the natives—as differentiated from the whites—definitely averse to a restoration of German rule. They cannot forget the "extermination order," which condemned a tribe (the Herera) to die in the desert. An impoverished country, obsessed by politics, with half a dozen more or less secret organisations working in different directions, is bound to produce exaggerations of every kind, but there appears to be little doubt that German rule was unnecessarily harsh and that the tribes—Bushmen, Dungmaras, Hereras, Hottentots, and the proud descendants of Namas and Orlams—would regret it if South Africa decided to relinquish her expensive responsibility.

Owing to the limitations and disadvantages of the land, its barren lowlands and its poor mineral prospects, it seems probable that the main population will always be native, and it may perhaps be admitted that, while the Germans made first-class soldiers out of the Africans they ruled, they were rarely, if ever, successful in administering a colony for the mutual benefit of all races concerned. Except as a military post and a reservoir of fighting power, South-West Africa could be of little use to any European nation. But there is already a fair trade between the Union and her dependency. South-West Africa imports sufficient raw material to calm the fears of the Union farmers, who once imagined their markets threatened without a profitable *quid pro quo*. Up to the date of my visit, however, uncertainty with regard to the future had prevented leaders of the Union party investing either capital or considered and consistent effort in the country.

ROSITA FORBES

Miscellany

A RUSSIAN HUMORIST

MANY West-European readers are inclined to think that Russian writers tend to be morbid and introspective. Yet satirical and humorous writers are as common in Russia, in proportion to others, as they are in any other country. From the Great Catherine's didactic plays, which exposed ignorance and greed, to Gogol's "laughter through tears"; from Saltykov's scathing skits on provincial administration to Averchenko's drawing-room humour, there is an uninterrupted tradition of self-criticism and of laughter at one's own expense.

The Russian may be a dreamer but he is a dreamer with the vision of a realist. The wish fulfilment theme, so conspicuous in the literature of this country, is absent from Russian literature. The Russian is well aware of his national defects; he points them out fearlessly; he laughs at them. The only thing which he seems as yet unable to do is to find an effective remedy for them!

During the civil war and the revolution the Russian humorist was silent. The struggle was too grim even for him to be able to see the lighter side of things. But as soon as life resumed a more normal course, he looked round and saw that, despite all the upheavals, the Russian man-in-the-street, the *obyvatel*, has remained essentially the same.

His chief characteristics, created by centuries of historical and geographical influences, were not to be charmed away by a few years of reform, however strenuous. Until the end of the eighteenth century the Russian peasant remained a semi-nomad, and a coloniser throughout his history. Always on the move, he had never formed the habit of being thorough about things like the Western farmer, whose fathers and great-grandfathers had tilled the same piece of land, and whose grandchildren were likely to inherit it. In Russia, the communal ownership of land and the irresponsibility of serfdom intensified the natural inclination of a wandering agriculturist—always shifting to a new ground as soon as he had exhausted the old—to do things by halves, to leave off worrying about the future, to trust to luck rather than to his own perseverance and ingenuity. Hard work he could do, such as clearing the virgin forest to sow his grain, but his energy was spasmodic, and he had long winters in which to be idle. When he submitted to the Mongolian rule, distant and uncongenial, he did so in a purely formal fashion, enduring its arbitrariness, yet evading interference, of a kind particularly objectionable to him.

And so, when the rulers of Russia, no matter who they are, create a new institution or establish a new government, certain national characteristics invariably make their appearance under a variety of disguise. They may be given the sinister name

of *sabotage* or of "criminal negligence," but they may often stand in fact for the same old Russian carelessness which could not be "liquidated" by a few stern decrees.

Against these traits of his countrymen Michael Zoshchenko's slings are directed. It is not the institutions but the men who run them that he attacks. Their carelessness, their laziness, their boastfulness and credulity, their tendency to overreach themselves and attempt difficult things before the easier, their lack of thoroughness, and—to compensate for these—an exaggerated formalism which makes ineffectual so many good principles of the Russian administration—examples of all these find place in his stories. In "Tooth Business" an unfortunate man, insured with the State, assumes that he can have a set of false teeth made as soon as he wants them. But the State dental clinic send him away, for he must lose no fewer than eight teeth and have them all missing in a row before the insurance can take effect. Another man, in "The Golosh," admires far too soon the generosity of the Lost Property Office in taking care of his old golosh lost on a tram. He has to make several trips and have some papers signed and completed before he gets his golosh back, by which time the second one is irretrievably lost.

The clash between superficially accepted social ideals and the real lack of inner culture is exposed in "Mistake" where the crowd grows indignant at a man maltreating an old woman, who is taken for his servant. They all find it necessary to apologise for interfering when he tells them that she is his mother. In "Get on With Your Sleep" and "The Crisis," the age-long habit of putting up patiently with inefficiency and discomfort is aptly and amusingly illustrated.

The contemporary Russian writers are brief and reserved when they give information about themselves. Zoshchenko describes himself as a Southerner and a countryman of Gogol. As such, he owns a heritage of humour for which the Ukrainians are so well known in Russia. He may also claim a superior cultural tradition, for while their more enterprising brothers were cutting their way through the Finnish forests, escaping from the Mongolian invaders, the South Russians accepted the protection—and a milder form of enslavement—from the civilised Poles.

Zoshchenko's father was a painter. He gave his son the best education available in pre-revolutionary Russia: the secondary school and University. Michael left school in 1913 and entered the Faculty of Law at St. Petersbourg University. He left it in 1915 to join the army as a volunteer, and thus had never completed his higher education. He served at the front until the end of the war. Gas-poisoning and a wound were his badge of honour, and a captain's grade his reward.

The heart disease which he developed as a result of his war experiences did not prevent him from joining the Red Army in 1918. It forced him, however, to give up soldiering a year later, and try his hand at writing short stories as a means of earning his living. He was successful at that, and from 1921, when his first story was published in the *Petrograd Almanach*, he has steadily grown in popularity as one of the most amusing writers of contemporary Russia. Many collections of his short stories had been printed in the Soviet Union and abroad. Michael Zoshchenko had written nothing under the old regime. He had never been out of Russia. Leningrad is his home at present. He is a Soviet writer *par excellence*. He is comparatively young (he was born in 1895), but not young enough to take life with the dreadful solemnity of a young student of Rabfak. His humour is neither bitter nor tragic, like the humour of the Tsarist satirists, Gogol or Saltykov. By poking fun at the Russian man-in-the-street, he pokes fun at many like himself. One suspects that personal experience is the basis of many of his stories. He selects, but does not exaggerate: he does not idealise life under the Soviets. Life is difficult in a poor country which, for the first time in its history, has achieved a large measure of self-sufficiency and independence from other countries. Life is difficult when the safety of the State has to come before the happiness of the individual.

"If we have, for the time being, to live in bathrooms and sleep in bugridden hotels," Zoshchenko seems to imply, "let us at least laugh at it. Perhaps if we laugh long enough and loudly enough, rotten houses will come down, or someone will invent a remedy for bedbugs, or hotel doorkeepers will learn better manners, or something. . . ." In a country like Russia you never can tell what might happen and when. . . .

ELISAVETA FEN

THE AMERICAN VIEW OF HUMAN NATURE

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck is admirably acted at the Gate Theatre. The play, founded on a successful novel in which, I am told, the Simple Simon has more time to endear himself to readers, is American; so is the cast. This is fortunate since the scene is laid in central California, and the types are indigenous. Neither the atmosphere nor the characters would have been convincing had they not been interpreted by actors entirely at home with them. The play itself is a sentimental tragedy. By that I mean that it touches us rather than moves us deeply, and that the climax (too easy to foresee) does not awake that strange, still exhilaration which springs from looking fate in the face. It is not the passion of man that brings about the catastrophe, but the accident that the central figure is a congenital half-wit. Lennie, with his gigantic muscular strength, was—to use the words of the sister of a lovable village simpleton I knew myself—"not exactly quite all right." And when George, who loves him, is forced to shoot him, because Lennie has absent-mindedly strangled a girl—the chase is up and he would be lynched unmercifully—we, the audience, feel: "Well, it is sad. But in a rough world where no man has time to be his brother's keeper, Lennies are a danger and better dead." *Of Mice and Men* is a play hard on the surface and tender underneath; it is about "tough guys" with warm hearts. The confidence of its appeal to the conviction that at bottom plain human nature is sound and splendid is characteristic of America. This is the deepest difference between America and Europe. In Europe such a feeling is apt to be merely sentimental—a pretence which people leading sheltered lives nourish in themselves because it looks kind and is comforting. But in America it is instinctively believed and common property. It is the main prop of their traditional passion for equality and of their generosity. To-day, it is speaking through the mouth of President Roosevelt. It is the most heartening element in the make-up of a suspicion-ridden modern world. The grudging response it meets here (often to the dismay of practical Englishmen who are eager to make use of it) is due to the reproach generosity of faith conveys. A by-effect of this faith in human nature is that it leaves the American playgoer free to revel in a surface cynicism of comment and laughter such as horrifies English audiences; for he cannot be frightened—*Man* is all right. This is not the theme, but it enters into the spirit of this play.

The lives of the men who compose the wandering mass of casual labour in America are very lonely. They have no roots; few are married. They compete against each other for temporary jobs, well-paid enough to dangle before them perpetually a seldom realised hope of some day settling down on a piece of land of their own and of being at last their own masters. They seldom hunt in couples, for each must take his chance as it comes; a pal may be as great a drawback as a wife in finding one. The curtain goes up on two such men, a big one and a small one, who are exceptions. Evidently they are bound together; they are on their way to a farm where they hope to get a job together. We soon learn from their talk that the smaller of the two, George, has found the great hulking fellow Lennie a confounded nuisance. Lennie has got into trouble by unintentionally frightening a girl, and George has had not only to fly with him but to supply the wits which enabled them both to escape. He is afraid that

Lennie will do something, or say something, which will lose the next job too, and then they will have to wander about together, hungry. And no wonder he is afraid of that. It is soon obvious from their talk that the giant is a child—a kindly, helpless simpleton. Like a child, Lennie loves to make George repeat over and over again the story of how happy they will some day be together in a shack of their own, " living on the fat of the land " and keeping (this is indispensable to Lennie's dream) rabbits. Like a child, he is never tired of hearing George repeat how they will always stick together. He corrects him when he does not use the same words he has used before. Lennie is very fond of small, soft, furry animals—rabbits, mice, puppies, but if the pet he is caressing shows signs of fear a spasm of instinctive sympathetic terror seizes him and he is apt unintentionally to kill the little creature he loves with a child's concentration.

Well, thanks to George's speaking up for him, they both get the jobs they are seeking. Lennie as a worker gives full satisfaction, doing the work of four. But unfortunately the son of the " boss " employing them has married a poor little floosey of a girl, whose only notion of getting into friendly contact with the men about her is to give them the glad eye. Her husband, Curley, is a bully who can use his fists and is fiercely jealous. George and the other hands on the farm are terrified of getting involved with Curley's wife, and George warns Lennie against speaking to her. You can guess what happens. She can't stand her life on the farm and plans to run away. That very day she finds Lennie alone in the barn and persuades him to stroke her hair. He can't stop; she, like the little puppy he was so fond of and killed, gets frightened, struggles—the nervous sympathetic spasm seizes him. Lennie flies to the place where George had told him to go *if* he ever got into trouble. And there George finds and shoots him, while telling him to look where the little house stands which had so nearly become their own. Yes, nearly. For on the farm was an old man who had saved money and had been ready to come in with them. This old man's sheep-dog had been to him what Lennie was to George, and it had had to be shot. The great merit of *Mice and Men* is the way in which it conveys that these " tough guys' " need above everything some outlet for affection.

The other men on the farm, with the exception of Curley, understand what Candy's dog meant to him and what Lennie, who was a gigantic child, meant to George; and yet that both had to be shot. Mr. John Mills plays the part of George, Mr. Niail MacGuinis, Lennie, Mr. Sydney Benson, Candy, admirably; and I cannot imagine the parts of the old negro and Curley's wife (Miss Claire Luce) being more completely filled. I have indicated the limitation of this sentimental tragedy, and that the spirit of it is something to be grateful for. I can only repeat that the interpretation leaves very little to be desired.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

YEATS AND SONG-WRITING

YEATS, during the last five years of his life, was haunted by the desire to revive the singing side of the poet's art. Indeed, one might with truth declare that just as Toscanini's unremitting advice to musicians of the orchestra has been *Cantare! Cantare!*—to sing! to sing!—so did Yeats urge upon young poets an identical message. It was partly with this purpose that he started his new series of *Broadsides* to which I have previously referred in these columns and his ideas on the subject of the alliance between music and poetry (to which he gave partial expression in the preface to the bound collection published by the Cuala Press in 1937) continued to develop up to the time of his death.

Yeats was not even an amateur musician. Rhythm meant much more to him than tone. Those who had some smattering of musical knowledge—to which he did not pretend at all—were liable to misunderstand his intentions completely. They construed him into an enemy of music, whereas he was a champion of poetry and of song. What he was fighting for was the ancient cause which has enlisted the sympathies of so many great musicians, especially operatic composers from Peri Caccini and Monteverde to Gluck, namely the subservience (if you like to call it such!) of the music to the words.

This subservience was in Yeats's mind the necessary preliminary to a perfect and equal marriage. What he demanded from a song was what Gluck demanded of an opera, namely that the music should second the poetry " by enforcing the expression of the sentiment and the interest of the situation." " My idea," says Gluck, " was that the relation of music to poetry was much the same as that of harmonious colouring and well-disposed light and shade to an accurate drawing which animates the figures without altering their outlines."

Like all great artists Yeats was never afraid of not being novel or in the fashion; also, he realised the advantages, indeed, the inherent natural rightness of founding a renaissance by a return to an earlier tradition. He modelled his own efforts on the folk-songs of his own country where popular singing to some extent still survived and he was not averse to a writer attempting to write new words to old tunes. This may seem a strange reversal of the principle that the words should come first and determine the music; but I think that it serves to elucidate the problem of the marriage between words and music by making it clear that the success of such a marriage does not depend upon priority, precedence or relative importance but upon a unity of conception. What is to be avoided is any conflict or disparity of aim between the words and the music.

In this Yeats was following in the steps of Robert Burns and Thomas Moore, both of whom wrote many of their songs to old airs. A good modern example of this is the poem about Munich (" More was lost at Munich ") which recently appeared in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, written by Anne Freemantle to a famous old Hungarian song, " Had a Horse," which strangely enough does not seem to be in Bela Bartok's selection of Hungarian Folk Music. I think this method of writing new poems to old airs a very useful practice, for it seems especially difficult for poets of our time to write songs. In fact the art of poetry seems to have developed during the past century to a state similar to that which music reached at the time of the latter madrigalists. The composers of madrigals had completely lost the art of lyrical composition; they treated the voices exactly as if they were instruments and the contrapuntal intricacy of their part-writing was such that the words might just as well have been utter gibberish for they were so manipulated, torn asunder and put together again that in any case it was as gibberish that they reached the ears of the listeners.

Writing recently in the *Listener*, I had occasion to criticise some vocal part-songs of Mr. Armstrong Gibbs, then being broadcast, for something of the same defect. A listener unfamiliar with the poems which he had set could not have understood the poems at all. From a purely musical point of view this is not a serious criticism and there was no doubt about the efficiency, skill and musical taste of Mr. Armstrong Gibbs's music. Nevertheless one may ask the composer what is the point of writing music to a poem by, say, Walter de la Mare (who was one of the authors whose words the composer was setting) if the words are rendered unintelligible by the music? But this is what modern composers do constantly when setting words to music and I think it is time that composers as well as poets made an attempt to return to a more simple and lyrical expression.

I should like to suggest that Mr. Benjamin Britten who has very successfully supplied music to several of Mr. W. H. Auden's plays, should try to collaborate with Auden and write some contemporary songs aiming at a direct popular appeal such as the old folk songs had. But for this purpose the words must be straightforward and lyrical and the music must follow

suit, always being so adjusted that it renders the words more rather than less clear and intelligible.

Yeats did not want the poet to write songs exclusively to old airs. He very much wanted contemporary music to the poets' songs, but he had found from experience that few professional musicians could understand what he was driving at.

W. J. TURNER

THE CONDEMNED CITY

ALONG the sullen streets at night,
Past open windows and the light
Shining on napery, past the gardens
Where a frosty lamplight hardens
Tiled path and theatrical grass, past mews,
Past papery chestnut avenues,
The tired spirit wanders on
To each new corner and black eidolon.
The shadow of a bus retreats
Beckoning to shadier streets.
Voices over the canal
Loiter, a bugle brays in hell.
Seeking what? A space to think
While others laugh and talk and drink.
Beyond the lights to see the stars,
Beyond the news to glimpse the wars
Approaching. The heart cracks at dawn
With all it has revolved upon.
Why in this world should hatred thrust
Upon unworldly men its *must*,
Who want for love and in despair
Will love a dog or cat, and hear
Music in a garden or
Find comfort in the meanest whore?
The bracelet in this window brings
Memory of enchanting things;
The hand that turned the bracelet may
Be turning loaded shells to-day.
The child that runs across the street
May next be covered in a sheet
Of stretcher bearers, while her home
Sinks burning like Imperial Rome.
Am I to be the Nero, then,
Of murdering and murdered men?
On the walls in jagged chalk
A hand has written words that talk.
"The Condemned City"—at King's Cross
I saw the inscription, and the loss
To come. The writing on the walls
Before the rotted building falls.

G. W. STONIER

THE MOVIES

"Love Affair," at the Carlton.
"Storm Over Bengal," at the New Gallery.
"Peace and Plenty."

Love Affair is like a cocktail party which goes on too long; the people who seemed so entertaining reveal themselves as sentimental bores, and the drinks which began by being cold and dry grow steadily warmer, sweeter and stickier. Charles Boyer and Irene Dunne are among my favourite movie stars; and their encounter on a transatlantic liner was wittily invented and delightfully developed. For some time Leo McCarey, the director, displayed a skill as neat as Capra's in the days before he caught a social conscience; the principals were not only pleasant to look at, but pleasant to know, the words they spoke amused, and the words which Miss Dunne left only just unspoken amused still more; everybody was rich, there was not a speck of dirt anywhere, and the photography was as pretty as a Christmas cake. Here, I thought, is at last the ideal escape film; and I sank into my stall prepared for a happy ninety minutes *senza Benito* and *weit von Adolf*. Then M. Boyer and Miss Dunne went ashore and visited his pawky old grandmother (Maria Ouspenskaya) who lived on the top of a hill, in a lovely be-pillared and be-pergola-ed mansion. At the sight of those pergolas and pillars the sparkle died in Miss Dunne's eyes, the wit withered on her lips, and she began to register "this-place-is-so-peaceful-so-serene" for all she was worth. She and M. Boyer even entered grandma's private chapel and knelt for an appreciable time in the dusty sunlight while an invisible chorus soared ecstatically and wordlessly aloft. Thus did the moral serpent enter our carefree Eden; after this anything might happen, and a good deal did. The arrival at New York, where both M. Boyer and Miss Dunne had unwelcome fiancés waiting for them, provided an amusing moment; but there was no mistaking it, the party had gone off, and it was no surprise to find Miss Dunne crippled in a street accident just before her wedding rendezvous with M. Boyer, and displaying thereafter a prodigious and highly inconvenient capacity for heroic renunciation. But nothing to which script or director subjected her could dim the charm and subtle comedy of Miss Dunne's acting.

"To think," murmurs Miss Latimer of *Storm Over Bengal* to her finacé, "to think of your poor brother dying so far from the England he loved!" "I'm not so sure," replies Captain Jeffrey Allison, sympathetically squeezing her hand: "Remember that poem?" And, taking no chances on her memory, he proceeds to quote it, solemnly and at some length . . . That was *Storm Over Bengal*.

Peace and Plenty is a film made by the Communist Party, which ends with an appeal to all Left-wing parties to unite in overthrowing the Chamberlain regime. The film has no difficulty in exposing the National Government's timid handling of the problems of nutrition, housing, agriculture and unemployment during its long period of office. Pictorial statistics are ingeniously employed, and unflattering photographs of Cabinet ministers cap each episode with undeniable ironic force. (But this is a dangerous weapon, for even party leaders of the Left cannot always be looking their best when the cameras click, and two can play at that game.) *Peace and Plenty*, being on 16 mm. non-inflammable film, is immune from censorship; and at a time when the tension of foreign affairs provides a splendid excuse for continued inactivity at home, its propaganda value is obvious. In dealing with foreign affairs it is itself rather more vulnerable and inconsistent, drawing attention somewhat disingenuously to the attacks on the churches in Germany, and proposing a common front with the friends of liberty and peace in the totalitarian countries without suggesting how this desirable object is to be achieved.

PETER GALWAY

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Wreckers," at Sadler's Wells

The Wreckers has come home to Sadler's Wells at last. And since it is the best English opera since goodness knows when (*A Village Romeo* comes later) it was high time. Dame Ethel, on the eve of her eighty-first birthday, was induced to mount the stage and deliver one of those tough, horsy, avuncular speeches in the style which has delighted readers of her books. Striding about in tweeds and a shapeless felt hat, with a cardboard box in one hand and a wreath of triumph in the other, she again captured her audience with anecdotes of deafness (that painful subject), of the early history of *The Wreckers*, of her intention in writing the choruses. It is indeed a pity that she missed hearing those choruses, finely sung, and as vital and impressive in their way as the Brindisi passages of *Otello*. Dame Ethel told us that she thought of the chorus as a person on the stage as important as any of the solo parts; and we can well believe it. There is a remarkable lyrical feeling and strength in the many choral passages of *The Wreckers*. Asked what was the intention of prose, Flaubert answered, *A faire rêver*. The same is true, a million times more, of music. Yet, in opera, the eye must be feasted; and if *The Wreckers* has a weakness it is that there is not enough movement

to satisfy the eye. True, the theme is dramatic and magnificently sustained; but Wagnerian rocks, and occasional flickers of lightning, are not enough to engage us for a whole evening. The singers, perhaps, felt this difficulty, and one or two seemed determined to exploit every *cliché* of operative acting. But *The Wreckers* went with a bang. It has all the gusto one missed, a few years ago, in the performance of a Sailors' Chorus at the Queen's Hall, when the only animation seemed to come from Dame Ethel herself, gay and nautical, who conducted.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, April 22nd—
Fiesta of National Songs and Dances by Basque Children, Dick Sheppard Memorial Club, Thomas Street, W.1, 3.

SUNDAY, April 23rd—
Lord Snell: "The British Empire and World Peace," Conway Hall, 11.
Eisenstein's "Alexander Nevski," Film Society, 2.30.
London Music Festival Opening Concert, Queen's Hall, 3.15.
H. J. Blackham: "Collective and Individual Behaviour," 153 Finchley Road, N.W.3, 6.15.
"The Unfinished," Phoenix Theatre, 8. In Aid of the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief.
London Theatre Concert, Cambridge Theatre, 8.30.

MONDAY, April 24th—
"Candida," Westminster.

TUESDAY, April 25th—
J. Omerod Greenwood: "Young Quakers and Conscription," Friends House, 1.20.
Hannen Swaffer at the Free German League of Culture, National Trade Union Club, 24 New Oxford Street, 8.
Ernst Kris: "The Growth of Group Feeling," 96 Gloucester Place, W.1, 8.30.
"Carrie and Cleopatra," by H. E. Bates, Torch. Till May 3rd.

WEDNESDAY, April 26th—
London Music Festival, Kreisler at the Albert Hall, 8.30.

THURSDAY, April 27th—
"Cupid and Psyche," Sadler's Wells.
"Hungarian Rhapsody," Adelphi.

FRIDAY, April 28th—
Debate: "This House Considers that Married Women do not get a Square Deal." Queen Mary Hall, Gt. Russell Street, 8. Dr. Edith Summerskill and others.
Fabian Society Social, Suffolk Street Galleries, 8.
London Music Festival Concert, Queen's Hall, 8.15.

Correspondence

AERIAL MINES

SIR,—Mr. H. G. Wells wrote in the *News Chronicle* on March 6th that "Air warfare can be eliminated almost completely." He went on to describe how this might be accomplished by the use of air mines, and continued: "The fact remains that it is possible to cancel out the air." It must be noted that he did not say that air mines, or aerial mines as I prefer to call them, could be used by any one nation as a means of defence; he claimed that they can "cancel out the air." By this he means that the air can, when occasion demands, be made practically impossible for all aircraft.

There can be no more urgent problem before mankind today, therefore, than to find a means of curbing the power of aircraft. To hope that one nation will find means of limiting the power of enemy aircraft while permitting its own to fly with immunity is not only vain, but ethically undesirable. The sky is a public place. It belongs to all nations.

Is it possible to prohibit the use of the sky for certain periods? For centuries men have striven to achieve the art of flying—to conquer the air. This century has witnessed its accomplishment, with the result that the whole world stands aghast at the horror which threatens it. Everywhere men scratch futile holes in the ground in a vain effort to escape from the Frankenstein monster they have created. Could anything be more pathetically ridiculous?

Mr. Wells' article raised such hopes in the hearts of people everywhere that brief—and not always accurate—descriptions of aerial mines were circulated and published in many lands. A German newspaper artist elaborated on the theme by publishing a drawing of a flight of aeroplanes flying to destruction in an aerial minefield. People everywhere seem to believe that aerial mines are about to be employed and that the world will presently be released from the torture of apprehension it now endures.

The facts are so otherwise that it is my duty to explain them. If then the people of the world decide that aerial mines can indeed achieve what Mr. Wells claims, the voice of humanity must be raised in no uncertain tones to demand that they shall be employed. As the inventor of the scheme I may be accused at the outset of personal interest. Let me hasten to say that, in a letter dated February 14th last to the Minister for Co-ordination of Defence, I offered to permit any Government Department to make use of my invention (which is patented) without consideration whatsoever of my financial interest. This offer was rejected in a letter dated February 16th.

Absolute conviction, backed from time to time by the endorsement and encouragement of eminent scientists and of senior officers of the Royal Air Force and Navy, has impelled me, during the last two years, to persist against a solid wall of official opposition and apathy, until now I have reached the stage where public opinion is demanding full knowledge of the scheme so that it may judge its value.

What, then, are aerial mines? They consist of nothing more than hydrogen-filled balloons, such as are in daily use by meteorological stations, supporting small bombs on a length of fine wire and set adrift on the wind at all altitudes.

But surely an enormous number of such obstructions would be necessary to prevent the passage of aircraft? Yes. But it must be realised that, for all their courage, airmen will not face every risk. The knowledge that they may encounter, at any moment and at any altitude, hundreds of thousands of fatal obstructions, invisible by night and almost so by day, is a risk that few will face.

What is the cost of each aerial mine? Five shillings or even less. It has been impossible as yet to make any experiments. The Air Ministry will not permit any tests. Enough is known, however, to enable eminent authorities to state that a very small explosion against an aeroplane in flight will permit terrific wind currents to enter the damaged surface and complete its destruction. Aeroplanes, for all their deadly power, are relatively fragile and very delicately balanced structures. An explosion which would do negligible damage to a house would be fatal to an aeroplane flying at two hundred miles per hour. Therefore, for technical reasons concerned with manufacture and lifting power of suitable balloons, a bomb containing three or four ounces of high explosive is considered adequate. The estimated figure of five shillings includes balloon, hydrogen, bomb, explosive, wire and attachments, and a combined detonator and time fuse. The last consisting of a device by which the bombs are exploded either by impact with aircraft or are self-destroying after a required period in the air, say from one to twenty-four hours.

The bombs, being of light metal only, do not scatter dangerous splinters like anti-aircraft shells. The balloons, when released from weight of bombs, rise to great altitudes where they eventually burst. All that comes to earth is fragments of light metal, no more harmful than falling leaves, and finally a deflated balloon, weighing a couple of ounces, and an ounce or so of fine wire.

What is the length of this wire? Forty feet is considered the correct length. It is not definitely known what will be the immediate result of an aeroplane striking the wire. Either the wind resistance of the balloon will drag the bomb against leading edge of wing, or it will swing up underneath the fuselage or tail, or the wire will become entangled in a propeller.

Is it possible that a fast plane might sever the wire or detach it from balloon before exploding the bomb? Eminent authorities declare that the initial resistance of the air-borne balloon is insufficient to cause such a result.

How fast can the balloons be filled and the mines released? Two men, almost without training, can fill and liberate two mines per minute. Therefore 4,000 men can release 120,000 in half an hour.

At what speed do the mines rise? It will vary with degree of inflation of balloons. They can reach 30,000 feet in thirty minutes. They can be regulated to remain at approximately the height required.

What happens in a strong wind? Their rate of rise is not impeded, only the angle. Obviously they must be released far enough to windward of all obstacles. The angle of ascent can be easily calculated.

Is much skill required in the charging and release of aerial mines? Very little indeed. Naturally care must be taken in the handling of bombs, and while inserting the detonators at the moment of release. Any troops of average intelligence can be employed, with a minimum of instruction.

To defend London, for example, from attacks from Europe in an

easterly wind would it be necessary to release mines from our East coast in continuous succession for many hours or even days? Probably. But the cost even then would be less than that of anti-aircraft guns, searchlights, interceptor planes with all the highly trained personnel involved, to say nothing of the risk to lives. It must be remembered that the prevailing winds in Western Europe are westerly. Moreover, the most essential point to realise is that in co-operation with other nations all over Europe it would be possible to take advantage of every direction of wind and so maintain a continuous stream of mines floating low over the territory of almost any nation that threatened war and prevent that nation's aircraft from leaving the ground. Mines at five thousand feet high, or less, would be sufficient for such a purpose. Aerial mines may also be liberated from ships at sea, either in their own defence, or of convoys or coastal areas.

In view of the fact that aerial mines are quite uncontrollable, will not sudden shifts of wind cause them to endanger friendly aircraft? Yes. It is for that reason that their ultimate, and perhaps immediate effect will be to eliminate aerial warfare, as Mr. Wells says. On the other hand, meteorological services can now accurately forecast the strength and direction of wind for twelve hours.

Doubt about the numbers of mines necessary in a given area seems to be the gravest objection to the scheme. The sky is large. If aerial mines are to cover all areas up to 30,000 feet it would seem that millions must be used every day? To establish an impassable barrage, yes. But a 100 per cent. effectiveness is not at all necessary. The mines would be unevenly spaced and invisible until right amongst them. The very promiscuity of their incidence would constitute their greatest deterrent effect.

Nevertheless, it is certain that the law of averages will compel the use of enormous numbers of aerial mines to ensure a certain percentage of casualties to attackers? Definitely. But the law of averages does not rule human courage. Flying in wartime is already so dangerous and complicated that it is difficult for any nation to find enough competent airmen. Combat with other planes or the avoidance of anti-aircraft fire, is a matter of personal skill, and therefore not unattractive to brave men. Possible collision with silent and invisible obstructions at any altitude, in any area and in unknown numbers is a risk that the bravest airmen will scarcely face.

If, then, aerial mines are as effective as claimed, why have not the defence authorities adopted them? The Air Ministry alone has power to decide on such a matter apparently. During the last two years full details have been put before all the defence authorities and several Ministers in person. Each in turn has resubmitted it to the Air Ministry, whose invariable reply is that it is "of no practical utility to the Royal Air Force." The vital question is not at all of utility to the Royal Air Force, but whether it is of use to the vast majority of people everywhere in the world.

Mr. H. G. Wells did not make his emphatic and startling statement without mature consideration. The world has every right to know whether the existing preposterous expenditure on aircraft and guns is not far more likely to hasten the destruction of civilisation than to offer any sort of security. Must we all continue to live in fear of the threats of a few upstart adventurers who, using "the blackmailing power of air bombing" as ruthlessly as any gunman, threaten the victims of their brutal avarice? Or, shall the world of decent people demand control of the skies above them, and, by using the only means yet discovered, *reconquer the air?*

Aerial mines can be in full production within very few weeks. A demonstration can be made, without harm to anyone, in an even shorter time. All that is necessary, is for people of all nations to declare that the sky belongs to them, and not solely to gangsters and air forces.

H. J. MUIR

SPANIARDS IN FRANCE

SIR,—I have had the opportunity of reading some letters sent by Austrian volunteers in the International Brigade to old friends of theirs who are refugees living in relative comfort in England. Most of these men had risked their lives and endured prison in their own country under its pre-Nazi form of Fascism. They had then fought through two years in Spain. The *débâcle* overtook them as they lay in camp near the Pyrenees, disarmed, awaiting permission to cross into France. When Franco's vanguard reached them, they were given arms again, and fought a series of bitter rearguard actions against an enemy who brought planes and tanks against their rifles. Retreating slowly, they saved the lives of tens of thousands of Spanish civilian fugitives, chiefly women and children, and at a heavy cost in killed and wounded they defended their own liberty. It was to find themselves, on the free soil of France, prisoners behind barbed wire under the guard of Senegalese, who often behaved with stupid brutality. The description of their life during the first weeks moved me, as I read it, to an anger that is best forgotten—nights and days spent on the open seashore, without blanket or coat or food of any kind, the search for grass or turf or driftwood to make some sort of shelter, then the onset of dysentery, which left its victims helpless and motionless, the total lack of any medical aid, and finally the arrival of food of sorts, bad in quality and wholly insufficient in quantity. This ordeal fell on men already tried by two years of incessant fighting and insufficient food. Their capacity for resistance was at a minimum, and hundreds of them were stricken with scurvy. Many who should have gone into hospital refused to do so, since the first who braved the only hospitals then available came out of them with a tale that scared the rest.

These letters end on a relatively cheerful note. The weeks of imprisonment under the open sky on the drifting sands are over. The men of the Brigade are now housed in wooden sheds, and their rations include a hot meal daily with bread and coffee. But they are still in rags, with only the one shirt on their backs. They cannot buy a postage stamp, or a newspaper, or a packet of cigarettes. Above all, they are prisoners under military guard—these men whose crime is that they fought for democracy, first in their own country and then in Spain. They feel themselves, as one of these letters puts it, "like so much old iron cast on the scrap-heap." "A few," he says, "are broken by what they have endured, but most of them have only one wish, to use their minds and their hands again for the good of society." May I, after reading these terrible letters, back the appeal for these Austrian and German volunteers which appeared in your issue of April 1st? It stimulated many generous gifts, and the Labour Spain Committee, of which I am chairman, has now £430, which it proposes to use to settle some of these men on farms in France. Buildings and implements will be provided by the French Government, but a capital sum of £4,500 is required for a colony of a hundred men. This is a debt of honour which we who have enjoyed our liberties in safety during these two years owe to the men who withstood the first onslaughts of the common enemy. Cheques should be sent to Mr. Austen Albu, 20, East Heath Road, London, N.W.3. The men of the Brigade, I should add, have an admirable organisation in Paris with which all the more distinguished German and Austrian exiles are associated, while their own former officers attend to the anxious daily work. Nothing that we give will be wasted.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

THE SPANISH CHILDREN

SIR,—In January we appealed for help to evacuate from Catalonia some of the 500 Spanish children supported by the Foster-parents' Scheme. The response was generous, and most of the children are settled in colonies near Biarritz. They are very grateful, as the following letter shows:

> Foster Mother, I am little but I shall learn a lot, and one day I shall be a man. You are English and I am only a poor Spaniard, but for what you are doing for me and for all the children of my country you shall be repaid one day. I promise this. We Spaniards are very poor, but we keep our word. Many thanks, many thanks. *Jesus Lopez.*

Many people think that now the Spanish war is over relief work is at an end, but indeed the problem is more acute than ever. France has generously offered protection to thousands of refugees, but mere shelter is insufficient for children who have been under-nourished for two years. Skin diseases and epidemics are rampant and meet with no resistance. A telegram received yesterday from our representative says:

> Six children died to-day refugee camp ten others seriously ill hospital stop transferring 32 our colonies appeal support.

We cannot let children die without trying to save them. Will anyone wishing to become a Foster-Parent or send a donation write to: The Hon. Secretary, Foster-Parents' Scheme, 76 Charlotte Street, London, W.1?

J. B. PRIESTLEY, Chairman
VERNON BARTLETT, Vice-Chairman
Foster-Parents' Scheme for Children in Spain,
"Constable's House," 76 Charlotte St., W.1.

THE CRIPPS PETITION

SIR,—Since your paper has given such consistent and able support to the idea of progressive unity, I was particularly dis-

tressed to find in your weekly Comments the remark that the Stafford Cripps Campaign is a "lost cause." This is not only not true, but even if it appeared true (to that type of dilettante politician who observes but does not participate) the remark would be a profound disservice to democracy.

As far as my locality of Lincoln, is concerned, the Cripps Petition Campaign is making great strides. It is natural that after the sensational launching of the Petition, publicity should wane during the period in which an organisation is built up to carry out the work. Rank-and-file work is rarely startling and does not appeal to armchair politicians who want thrills. But nevertheless it is the backbone of any political movement.

In Lincoln the Petition Committee is obtaining signatures at an average rate of one signature to every two houses, a remarkable achievement in view of the average citizen's reluctance to sign anything. At the same time we are holding a large number of propaganda meetings, and have sold a large quantity of literature to completely unpolitical people. The general impression we have gained is that the Petition fulfils a long-felt want; that it is something new, and different from the old party appeal, which is completely out-moded and threadbare. K. E. HEATH,

27 Westcliffe Street, Lincoln. Secretary, Lincoln Petition Committee.

[We are far from regarding the movement for a strong progressive alliance in some form or other as a lost cause. We are aware too that there are many areas in which the Petition has become the symbol and centre of a new democratic movement. But the Immediate object of the Petition was to force the Labour Party Executive to accept a Popular Front at the Whitsuntide Conference; and that we fear is now clearly a lost cause.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

SIR,—"Democrat" has again raised the question of the "Trade Union Dictatorship" which some of the Popular Front supporters claim to have discovered.

I do not think that any Trade Unionist will disagree with his statements; the Trade Unions do dominate the Labour Party to a great extent; the Trade Union subscriptions do supply Transport House with four-fifths of its income, etc. Would it, after all, be so very distressed if the Labour Party were indeed the political weapon of the militant workers of the country—even though it does cater for a wider class, workers and others, who do not pay the regular, if hard-earned, subscriptions to a Union.

The Labour Party registered over 8 million votes at the last election. A million new members of Trade Unions was a step towards raising the vote to 12 million, but apparently this does not satisfy the middle-class element, so they find the movement undemocratic because it rejects "alliance" with Communist and Liberal alike.

On account of the present schism political success may not be attained, but the organised proletariat will still remain the safest bulwark against Fascism. S. G. SMITH

111 Greswold Street, Carters Green, West Bromwich, Staffs.

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Published by The Hogarth Press

INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING

SIR,—In the *Times* of April 14th Sir Walford Davies pleads for "more and more factual inter-broadcasting, nation with nation." Stating the plain truth that there is no quarrel between the *people* of the totalitarian states and the democracies, he declares: "Man is man the world over. Broadcast truth can assuredly do better for every nation than the swiftest bombers."

That is a sane, simple statement of the facts, but must not be allowed to rest there. It must be translated into immediate action. To this end we urge the B.B.C. to take steps at once to collaborate with the International Broadcasting Union, of which it is a member, to produce a world programme, in which the "man in the street" of every country shall tell his fellows throughout the world that he wants, before all, to be their good neighbour. Everyone knows that this is so, but it needs to be spoken now, and not by official spokesmen, but by the people themselves.

Such a broadcast presents no great technical difficulties: the vast world-wide programme, "Youth Sings Over the Frontiers," broadcast in 1935—and, incidentally, with Berlin as its distributing centre—was an inspiring success. The building-up of such a programme should be done with great speed by the B.B.C., for, if the common man in every country cannot make his voice heard in this emergency, he may be led to slaughter and be slaughtered by millions with whom he has no shadow of a quarrel.

Leeds. JAMES ! EATON
ALFRED DUNNING

THE PANDA

SIR,—I can't claim to have actually seen a panda in the wild, but I know the country he lives in and I can't accept the "deep bamboo forests where the light must always be dim."

As a matter of fact I doubt if he often comes below 7,000 feet and the light glare is intense. Moreover he has a habit of keeping close to the snow line, going up to higher altitudes in the summer. As with virtually all white furred animals his coat is a protective camouflage in the snow, so you can't expect him to live in the dark! It's true he eats nothing but bamboo, but the "deep forests" are more in the nature of scattered groves. I'm afraid I have no suggestions as to why he covers up his eyes. L.

G. E. R. GEDYE

SIR,—In "A London Diary" in the current issue of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, it is stated that Mr. G. E. R. Gedye "got the sack from *The Daily Telegraph* because it was annoyed that he should write a book containing information and comments which *The Daily Telegraph* refused to print."

I should be glad if you would allow me to point out that the facts are rather different. Mr. Gedye published a violently worded political commentary on events in Central Europe. Those events were a chapter in a story not then, if yet, finished, and the progress of which it was Mr. Gedye's duty as our Central European correspondent to report impartially day by day. Mr. Gedye honestly took the view that he could publicly show a partisan attitude to those events without impairing his reputation as an impartial recorder of news. We believed that our readers would not think so, and that in fact Mr. Gedye had himself destroyed his value to us as a reporter. As a result Mr. Gedye resigned by mutual arrangement.

It will be seen that the question does not arise whether we do or do not take a different view from Mr. Gedye of the Munich Settlement and the events leading up to it. We have, in the proper columns, given our own opinion of these events.

The Daily Telegraph. ARTHUR E. WATSON
Managing Editor.

April 23rd 1929—April 23rd 1939

NOT THAT WE WANT TO BOAST

but it's our birthday!

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

ONE of the chief differences between the people who live in the great urban and suburban areas of England, and the inhabitants of genuinely country districts, which may be roughly defined as outside the delivery areas of the great stores and multiple shops, is their attitude to their possessions. The true countryman likes to feel that all his belongings are immortal or that at any rate they will outlast him. He hates throwing things away since everything which has been made has cost labour, and it seems wasteful to destroy it. For this reason he dislikes all the packets, tins, and patent wrappings which add nothing to the value of the things they swathe; he prefers to see a pound of currants scooped out of a wooden drawer and weighed in a paper bag to buying them in a carton. For he likes to find a use for everything, and even the paper bag, carefully folded up, will see service again in the home. To the townsman who accepts joyfully a civilisation which scraps all its motor cars every five years, such an attitude of mind seems stingy. To the countryman the modern practice of wastefulness seems lacking in respect. It is not so much, I think, a superstitious fear that wastefulness will be punished by famine, and that one day God will refrain from snowing the world under with bottles and tins and patent fastenings, so much as an unconscious animism, which makes him see the individual peculiarities of material objects. When possessions are completely worn out they are regretfully superseded, just as when the old dog dies, one looks about for a puppy. But when things are broken, they are, if possible, mended. The blacksmith will be called in to make new fire-bars for the kitchen range, the china will be kept to be riveted. The countryman, living in the world of skilled craftmanship, finds it painful to adapt his ideas to the economics of mass-production.

* * *

This different attitude on the part of the rustic consumer is even greater in the case of the producer. The countryman normally enjoys his work far more than the townsman. One of the best books about the country which I remember reviewing was Mr. Rose's *The Village Carpenter* (Oxford) in which all the kinds of work which a carpenter in the country is expected to undertake were described in detail. Mr. Rose, who belonged to the third generation of his family to be carpenters, gave an account of all the work which he could remember, much of which has completely died out. Thus he included the sawpit work he remembered as a boy, the recogging of windmills, and the construction of their sails, and the construction of wooden field pumps, as well as the day-to-day work of the present time.

* * *

Everyone who has enjoyed reading Mr. Rose's book will certainly appreciate *Made in England*, by Dorothy Hartley (Methuen, 15s.), which deals only with surviving country industries, and includes none which are obsolete. It covers a far wider field than Mr. Rose's, and is not nearly detailed enough. Indeed, it surveys in 245 pages material which would provide subject matter for a series of technical books. But though she has inevitably to leave a lot out, she often picks out some particular detail and gives a thorough description of it. For example, she explains exactly how to make a heather broom. She leaves out everything to do with pure farming and everything to do with the sea and with fishing. Thus she gives an account of the woodman's work, cutting coppice, making hurdles, etc., and leaves out the closely related farm work of laying hedges and ditching. An interesting chapter would be on the kinds of hedges. My own knowledge of work in the woods is from watching Kentish woodmen when I was a boy. The sweet chestnut was left till long enough for hop poles; other parts of the woodland were cut rather more frequently for faggots, and the young oak saplings left standing here and there where they had chanced to grow from acorns in the clearing, to make timber later on.

* * *

After work having to do with the woods Miss Hartley deals with all the work dealing with straw. She describes the different kinds of haystack (although this is farm work) and the stack centres built to give a draught when damp hay is heating, in Scotland. I have myself helped to build a haystack with two chimneys which served the same purpose of aeration. They were square in section, open-ended boxes about eight feet long, which were pulled up as the haystack grew higher and higher. They were left in place for a few weeks while the hay was settling, and only removed when the stack was thatched. Miss Hartley gives a brief account of all the various kinds of thatch, and of the ways of securing it, and discusses the danger of fire—but she doesn't mention what townspeople who move to thatched cottages in the country ought to be told, that a thatch is much safer with an open hearth or open iron grate. A range with its iron flue is more liable to send up pieces of incandescent soot and sparks. Miss Hartley has illustrated her book profusely with photographs, drawings and diagrams, which have the immediate effect of making the reader wish to try his hand at making the things she describes. Those of straw chairs and straw beds are particularly attractive. Curiously enough, though she gives an illustration of a skep (which she everywhere calls a skelp), she does not describe the different kinds of these straw hives, nor how they can be used without killing the bees in autumn. There is a great deal to be said in favour of keeping bees in skeps for anyone who does not wish to have to give a great deal of time to them. Oddly enough Miss Hartley does not discuss cane work, or mention bulrushes, though she describes all the uses of straw, marram, grass and osier in making baskets and chairs. One drawing shows an eel trap woven of osier at Earith, the making of which must have required extraordinary skill.

* * *

The following passage gives a picture of the author's character:

> A couple of years ago, passing through Anglesey, I stopped at a stone bridge, on which sat a postman, awaiting his mail van. I don't know what impulse made me suddenly ask him if he could "plait little toys of rushes." He looked surprised—but without saying a word, he bent over the little bridge, to where a small stream fingered its way between reedy shallows. Silently he selected a handful of reeds, and sitting there on the stone wall in the autumn sunlight, he plaited me a perfect small green cage or rattle box, in which two small white pebbles clicked together for "birds."

That passage shows Miss Hartley's characteristic and most fortunate gift—which is for finding what interests her. From many casual remarks one gets pictures of her listening to the distant tapping of a tinker's hammer—and at once following the sound across the Scottish mountain until she comes to his tent, of catching a smell of woodsmoke and finding a charcoal burner, of sleeping out in the camp of a party of woodmen making tent pegs for a Government contract. She has spent days hanging about the village smithy, watching quarrymen at work, or shepherds putting up a sheepfold of hurdles in a turnip field. She is obviously free of that embarrassed shyness which is the curse of most of us, and so she has learned a great deal that most of us don't know. The hair in an ancient piece of plaster sets her deducing the changes in the breeds of cattle which have occurred since it was made. She is altogether a delightful person and has written a most interesting book. It is of course a pleasure to notice a few things she has left out: for example, she describes tag rugs in some detail but says nothing of loopy rugs, which are made in Yorkshire from a continuous twist of rag. Loops of this are pulled through canvas; they untwist and then are too large to go back through the holes. And though she describes thick woollen quilts, she says nothing of patchwork quilts and their patterns. *Made in England* is a book which I most thoroughly recommend.

DAVID GARNETT

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LONGMANS

NEW NOVELS

Good Morning, Midnight. By JEAN RHYS. *Constable.* 7s. 6d.
We Live. By LEWIS JONES. *Lawrence and Wishart.* 7s. 6d.
October Day. By FRANK GRIFFIN. *Secker and Warburg.* 7s. 6d.
The Hopkins Manuscript. By R. C. SHERRIFF. *Gollancz.* 7s. 6d.

It is Miss Rhys' misfortune that she so brilliantly achieves the effect she intended. *Good Morning, Midnight* is an incident in the story of Sasha, a dim, middle-aged, melancholic Bohemian sinking into mental, physical and psychological decay. Sasha goes to Paris for a holiday, drags from cinema to cinema, drinks from café to café, wanders from failed artist to unsuccessful gigolo, and with a helplessness that would be pathetic were it not so dowdy carries on her losing skirmish against an indifferent universe. Sasha is as unforgettable as a Cezanne and as boring as her numerous prototypes who clutter the bars of Montparnasse. Miss Rhys has drawn a portrait that is very near perfection, and the result is as profoundly depressing as it is possible for a work of art to be.

Of course there is more to the story than this, and the author tries to contrast her heroine's timorous world-weariness with the triumphant (though occasionally tortured) animality of a mindless young gigolo. Unfortunately, though Sasha is copied from life, the gigolo is merely facsimilied from fiction, and his naive greed, lovable viciousness, childish amorality, etc., are deplorably familiar to any student of the second-rate international novel. His presence here, however, is not wholly to Miss Rhys' discredit, for the lapse of her imagination displays in high relief her purely literary skill, and she persuades us to tolerate even such a puppet as this. She is a fine enough stylist to be almost independent of her subject; when she chooses her words like a poet, who can blame her for sometimes forgetting to be a philosopher? *Good Morning, Midnight* is an admirable specimen of its kind: my admiration for the kind itself is rather more qualified. Can a study in accidie—the seventh sin so deadly that it gives not even transient pleasure, demands no punishment other than its own existence and failed to inspire even Elizabethan dramatists—ever be other than sterile? The person whose every moment is wearily obsessed with trivialities, whose preoccupying problems are whether or not to cross the road or go to a theatre, seems no more suitable for "creative" writing than a life prisoner in a solitary cell. You can, if you are a good writer, do it once: let it become a habit and your work falls a victim to its own preoccupation. There is, I think, little danger of this happening to Miss Rhys, and though her book left me despondent I found it quite remarkably impressive.

Both *We Live* and *October Day* are proletarian novels in the strictest sense of the word. Their characters (with the exception of a few repulsive class enemies) are workers, their authors are thoroughly class-conscious from a Marxist angle, and they both deal with open social struggle. More distinctively still in these days of popular fronts and historical sagas, they describe the movement of masses rather than the interplay of personality, and treat individuals as the more or less helpless raw material of vast economic forces. Messrs. Jones and Griffin, in fact, are still holding the stage from which Eisenstein has been thrown.

We Live is much the more successful of the two novels. Lewis Jones, who died last January, was a Rhondda miner and Communist militant, and his story of political conflict in a Welsh mining village combines information and passionate conviction. Work in the pits, a stay-in strike, the internecine quarrels inside a trade union and, behind it all, the growing shadow of industrial depression are described with a detail and understanding that make one forgive the occasional naivity of the presentation. The trouble with Lewis Jones was that he suffered very badly from *myopia ideologica*—the inability to see any colours except black and red—and all his characters are little more than animated types with virtues and vices to suit their political convictions. Yet the author had a sufficient understanding of personality, especially of Welsh personality, to make us wonder whether perhaps the propagandists are correct, and whether in circumstances of open class war right is inevitably on the scaffold and wrong inevitably on the throne through the inescapable logics of morality and economics. *We Live* is not well written: there are far too many sentimental conceits like "a tall smoke-stack stuck its head through the ruddy glow of the pit furnaces, too proud to notice the clamour of the storm," and although the author was clearly very talented, he wants the imaginative eye for significant detail that distinguishes the fine descriptive writer from the competent reporter. Were his book dealing with a London suburb or an American slum it would deserve no more than an honourable mention. As it is, the subject lends a vitality the treatment lacks, and makes it a novel worth reading to-day however readily one discards it to-morrow.

We Live is, in spite of its political message, almost a folk novel, and describes a society that is still practically a tribal group. *October Day* proudly terms itself "a novel of the people," claims to "chart the throbbing pulse of London," and tries to cut a section across the whole working class. The theme is a good one. The Day of the title is October 4th, 1936, when immense crowds round Aldgate blocked Mosley's march to the East End and, maybe, put an end to Blackshirt Fascism as a force in this country. Mr. Griffin, by snapshotting the reactions of a number of ordinary, unrelated people, tries to show how the demonstrations came about and to what they owed their success. None of the characters, except for two revoltingly arrogant Communists, is at all politically conscious, and we see them awaken under the twin stimuli of baton charges and casual conversation to an understanding of what it all means. But if Mr. Griffin's plot is promising, his execution wholly betrays it; and if the people of *We Live* are typed, those of *October Day* are positively multigraphed. Handsome policemen, no doubt, are sometimes enamoured of depraved peeresses and, in such circumstances, would certainly delight to display their prowess with the truncheon before the adoring eyes of their limousined inamorata. But when, on the evening of the demonstration, lust turns to ashes and death requites debauchery, I feel we have stepped out of the novel and into the novelette. *October Day*, unfortunately, has enough simple social message to make it highly readable, and the excitement of the righteous mass-emotion it describes may sweep away the politically conscious reader in the same way that Buffalo Bill can stir an educated but inhibited schoolboy. Novels of this sort gain, like Russian films, a special tolerance because of their subject matter, and tend to be pardoned normal critical standards for the sake of their presumed moral value. When they are good this is not very important;

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HEATH CRANTON
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Men and women, in all countries we suppose, are going about to-day saying what they would do if only this wretched and insane threat of war could be removed.

Like everybody else, whether in business or in private life, the question has arisen in our minds whether we should or should not carry on in the usual way with our ordering of new stock and sundry other normal commitments.

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when they are bad it sets up precedents for loose thinking and writing that have already had their ill effects on Left wing literature.

The Hopkins Manuscript is a placidly amusing Wellsian fantasy of inter-planetary cataclysm and inter-continental slaughter. The Moon falls on to the earth (Mr. Sherriff, unlike H. G. W., fails to explain the mechanics of this phenomenon), devastates Europe and subsides in mountainous ruin into the Atlantic. By cynical compensation the lunar rubble turns out to contain more raw materials than Hitler dreams of in his wildest Ukrainian fantasies, and the remnants of the Western Powers begin to fight over the spoils until Nemesis, sketchily disguised as a new Tamerlane, rises in the East and sweeps up the dregs of Europe. The story is told by Mr. Hopkins, one of the last survivors of the various disasters, and is mainly devoted to his endearing snobberies and anecdotes about his prize poultry, with catastrophic thunders providing material for his comic and insensitive reactions. But, probably because Mr. Sherriff is not Wells, Mr. Hopkins is by no means a Britling, and his appalling experiences are no more than the clumsy stage machinery for a conventional little comedy. Never, for all his apparatus, did Mr. Sherriff succeed in horrifying, stimulating or even surprising me; the fact, I suppose, is that the real dangers surrounding us are so much more alarming than Yellow Perils or lunar eccentricities that these old clichés have temporarily lost their effect. *The Hopkins Manuscript*, however, may be recommended to those who want their minds taken off unpleasant realities, personal or international. JOHN MAIR

POLITICAL RECOLLECTIONS

Haldane, 1915-1928. By Major-General Sir FREDERICK MAURICE. *Faber.* 18*s.*

Records and Reactions, 1856-1939. By THE EARL OF MIDLETON. *Murray.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Amongst the recruits from other parties who joined Labour after the war the ablest and one of the most valuable was Lord Haldane. It would be a mistake to think of him as a Socialist, but he was on the Socialist side because, like Matthew Arnold a generation earlier, he realised that democracy could not grow in this country unless it was organised and educated. Just as Matthew Arnold studied Prussian education and saw that it had plan and purpose, so Lord Haldane was profoundly impressed with the folly of British self-satisfaction and *laisser faire*. He saw too that the hope for England lay in the immense desire amongst working people to understand and improve their society. The two things he had most in mind in joining the Labour Government were the opportunity of again working on the Committee of Imperial Defence and of trying to create something like a working-class university out of the W.E.A. He wanted to nationalise the mines and to simplify the relations of government departments. He wanted to reform English justice and, as Lord Chancellor, he carried further the legal reform work of Lord Birkenhead; but the admirable Report on the Machinery of Government, for which he was mainly responsible, was shelved more quietly, but as efficiently, as the Report of the Sankey Commission. We still have no Minister of Justice, and though we have recently reverted to the small inner Cabinet of the war, it was quite beyond our ruling class seriously to consider Lord Haldane's intelligent proposals for co-ordinating and simplifying our central administration.

Sir Frederick Maurice's second volume deals with the period from 1915 until Lord Haldane's death in 1928 in a sensible but rather uninspired way. He might easily have made the material much more interesting, but he is not to be accused of any of the usual biographical faults of flattery and superfluous detail. It is a straightforward, commonsense and rather dull affair—enlivened by occasional discoveries such as a brilliant and passionate letter from W. B. Yeats beseeching the Government to refrain from the folly of trying to impose conscription in Ireland. Sir Frederick begins with a discussion of the effects on Haldane of the scurrilous attack on him as a pro-German when war began in 1914. Lord Haldane's refusal to be drawn into any controversy or even to reply to the cruel accusations made against him is the finest episode in his career. When we recall the venom of the attack on him, deliberately fostered, as Sir Frederick Maurice shows, by Lord Northcliffe and a group of jingo journalists, one cannot speak too strongly of his restraint, disinterestedness and patriotism. He came through at the end with a greater reputation both publicly and privately because he left his vindication to time and the facts. Mr. Asquith's part in the affair is not a happy one. Sir Frederick quotes a

warm letter of support for Lord Haldane from Mr. Asquith which was read at a party meeting in 1915, but the papers that would have vindicated Lord Haldane were not published and Mr. Asquith spoke no adequate words in his friend's defence at the time they were most needed. Without full knowledge of Mr. Asquith's difficulties, one must not speak too strongly, but I do not think that the most ardent of his admirers could altogether acquit him of pusillanimity on this occasion.

In his autobiographical recollections, Lord Midleton, now more than 80 years of age, has some interesting comments to make on this controversy. While supporting Lord Haldane against those who attacked his integrity and patriotism, he draws on his experience at the War Office to fasten on Lord Haldane some of the responsibility for the muddle of 1914. On this the layman can scarcely judge, but Lord Midleton's account certainly suggests that, while Lord Haldane had efficiently carried out his task of organising the Expeditionary Forces, he had too readily accepted the purblind advice of experts who did not think machine guns and other modern weapons of war as important as the ability to form fours smartly and keep your buttons clean. Lord Midleton's last pages suggest a doubt which is shared by many others, whether those who have had the spending of the immense sums of money voted for rearmament during the last few years have learned the lessons of 1914.

Records and Reactions, 1856-1939, is not an important book, but the student of politics will find occasional passages of real interest. It adds substantially to our information about the Kitchener-Curzon quarrel that led to Lord Curzon's recall to England; and explains with authority and inside knowledge that this quarrel was only part of a larger controversy between the Cabinet and Lord Curzon; that Lord Curzon had in fact developed regal views of his position in India and insisted with sublime hauteur on carrying out a policy, which neither the Military Command nor the British Cabinet was ready to sanction. Another interesting passage records a conversation between Lord Salisbury and the Kaiser in 1901. The Kaiser wished, he says, "to peg out a claim in South America." Lord Salisbury was to keep the United States quiet, and in exchange the Kaiser promised to keep Russia off Britain. Lord Salisbury was so sure that this would antagonise America and encourage the Kaiser to all sorts of foolishness that he would not even report the suggestion to the Cabinet. "With his flank protected by us, he would be rattling us in his scabbards all over Europe," he said. The Kaiser's comment to Lord Midleton was: "Lord Salisbury is obsessed with the balance of power in Europe; there is no balance of power except me and my thirty army corps. England is short-sighted; ultimately she will be pressed out between Russia and the United States, as she has no allies." Lord Midleton replied: "If I am alive, sir, in twenty years' time, I shall look back on this conversation with great interest," to which the Kaiser said: "No, I won't be tied down; it may be fifty years; but it will come." The comments of the Kaiser and of Hitler on this prophecy to-day would be interesting. KINGSLEY MARTIN

AN ENGAGING ROGUE

What Rough Beast? The Story of "Ironfoot Jack." By MARK BENNEY. *Peter Davies.* 8*s.* 6*d.* (Published Monday, April 24th.)

Mr. Mark Benney's book begins, most auspiciously, in the London Library. In those iron galleries, reminiscent of the Victorian prison, he paused among the biographies and the impulse came to him to write the life of a man "who had been admired for his stupidity." A really enchanting idea, which perhaps he has hardly carried out. But the man he celebrates is a most engaging, original rogue. "Ironfoot Jack" was the denizen of a Soho caff, where he was to be seen dragging his iron foot and shouldering his bulk between the tables, shaking his tress of hair, flapping a greasy morning coat, among shadowy dancers. He carried the rank of professor: lecturer in physiology and astrology. He had been in turn showman, escapologist, the founder of a religious sect known as the Children of the Sun, busker, Hyde Park orator and dilletante anarchist. He had a disconcerting style in interruption:

> "Accordin'," said Jack, in tones of weighty sarcasm and mouthing his phrases slowly, "Accordin' to the 'clesiastical fee-ery . . . Gawd cre-hated the world before 'e cre-hated youman beens. Is that right, Mr. Speaker?" The speaker was too astonished by this strange monitory apparition to do anything but nod faintly. The audience tittered a little, and Jack continued on a rising note of triumph. "Then Gawd cre-hated the world before 'e cre-hated youman beens . . . *hand* 'e said 'Let there be light' . . . then Gawd must of bin tawkin' to wimself. . . ."

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> "And," he finished off rapidly before the rising angers of the audience should drown him, "hanyone what tawks to wimself his . . . mently unbalanced. . . ."

The means by which he succeeded in making a livelihood were brisk and varied. At one time, in a phase of prosperity, he hit on the idea of advertising in low journals, "The World's Most Daring Book on Problems of Sex and Marriage—By more than a Hundred Eminent Authorities"; and subscribers received, by return of post, a cheap copy of the Bible. Some mystery attached to the story of his iron foot, which had originated (according to different versions) from a shark bite in the Burmese archipelago, an avalanche in Tibet, an encounter with a circus lion, a bite from a bloodhound, a bootlegging adventure, a car accident. You choose whichever you find most likely or most picturesque: Jack himself hovered among them impartially. He is such a liar that one likes his cheek. One of his sidelines was selling scents, blended by himself, to the girls of Soho.

> "Blended it meself, I did," with a caress in his husky voice. "It's a secret, I got it from a Yogi in a Buddhist temple. Just one touch on the left temple"—he bent towards her, and pointed to her brow with a fat finger—"an' it demolishes depression, sordidness and monotony. A drop on the *right* temple"—his finger moved three inches to indicate the place—"an' it hinduces sexual desire!"
>
> The girl, obviously impressed, took the bottle from his hand and inspected it closely. But Jack had not finished.
>
> "*And*," he said triumphantly, "just one drop at the bottom of the spinal cord, and it's a 'undred to one contraception!"

Soho, with its low dives and dingy haunts, is as much hero of the book as Jack himself. Mr. Benney knows it in and out, and draws a picture full of gusto. *What Rough Beast?* indeed, admirably explores this strange neighbourhood. It is much the best book he has written since his autobiography. Those who have a taste for the grandiloquent and ramshackle, for Micawberisms in life, will find it irresistible.

G. W. STONIER

SPANISH TRENCHES

From Spanish Trenches. By MARCEL ACIER. *Cresset Press.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

This book is a collection of letters, published under American auspices, from men and women serving in the International Brigade or hospital units in loyalist Spain. Strange, unbearable reading for this week, a probe, without the anaesthetic of victory, into a raw wound. Even while Madrid still stood it seemed certain that in the end Spain will have been once more the grave of the faith, hope and illusions of the Europeans who have intervened in her affairs. The history of that other International Brigade of 1823, the Battalion of the Rights of Man, which stood against the absolutist aims of the Duc d'Angoulême, has been repeated.

Yet if the *No pasarán*, which occurs like an incantation in these excited letters, has proved to be a delusion to those who used it and a humiliation to Englishmen stupid enough to throw away their future with their past, one ineradicable gain survives. I mean the memory of the defence of Madrid. That despised capital, with no theatrical past of dynamite and ideology, has the heroic succession to Verdun. It has become the unforgettable symbol for all who may have to fight the passive treachery of their rulers—rulers who have lost touch not only with the rights but also with the profound and simple patriotism of the common people. More concretely, the writers, scientists, doctors, workmen, professors, nurses, who write these letters, saw the opening of a new era in the story of warfare. It was a war for export, for Western Europeans were still afraid to try it on one another. It was waged upon the civilian and its special characteristics have been mass-executions and terrorism directed especially against the working class. There is nothing new, at least since 1914, in the idea that in modern war you must destroy the mind of your enemy, but Fascism did not get the expected results because everyone knew it aimed to destroy the mind in peace as well:

> I saw Nicasio, who is 17 years old, and Orubio, a farm hand from the mountains, who had to walk three days in order to take service with us. We have often laughed about Orubio during those first days in the barracks: he had a hammer and sickle shaved on his short military hair-cut. Only those from the village could possibly think of something like that! One afternoon, when I was walking with Orubio on the Avenido de la Republic (*sic*), he suddenly started crying. He pointed to a woman who was giving the breast to her baby, while a little girl of about two was holding on to her skirts. 'Mine was also three months and two years," he said, "when the Fascists came and shot them all dead because they refused to tell where I was hiding." From then on nobody laughed about Orubio's hammer and sickle coiffure any more. He himself explained it as follows: "When the Fascists get me, they will at least know that I am a Communist."

The quotation comes from the most interesting writer in this book. He is Jef Last, a native of Amsterdam, who has apparently written a book called *Zuider Zee*. Has he ever been published in England? He is a brilliant reporter, grave, experienced and instructed. After Last there is Kantorowicz, known to readers of *New Writing*, Erenburg, the Russian, and many Germans. There are English; and Irish from the I.R.A. as well. Another curious Dutchman is Lambert Beekman. He was a pedlar who, on his journeys from village to village in Holland, made friends with a labourer who told him about the Spanish war. Having no one in the world he decided to go to Spain. He writes with a charming, fanciful gusto:

> These poor Fascists all run around with a beard a yard long and more; they have sworn not to get shaved except in Madrid and now they cannot fight any more because they are tripping all the time over their beards.

The Americans write with less intimacy. They are wonderstruck by Spain, upset by delays and inefficiency; they write home (as one of the Englishmen does, too) enthusiastically saying, "here things are real at last." It is the gift of primitive countries to make things seem more "real." The Americans have a shrewd practical cunning. Some Anarchist mechanics refused to work on an aeroplane with the Communists. The despairing Americans at last played a trick. They went up to the plane and started a heated argument. They raged at one another and then walked away in different directions saying they would not help one another in the air or on the ground in the future. The pride of the shocked and sheepish Anarchists was struck by this. They started work on the plane at once. "In regard to the language," writes another American, touching on a lighter side of intervention, "Charlie is not the Spanish speaker he considered himself. He has been grossly misrepresenting himself all these years."

The most self-revelatory of the writers is Pablo Brau, a Cuban who was killed. His observations have a curiously dispassionate edge to them, a sort of Tolstoyan curiosity about behaviour in war. He is the only writer who has it. "Then I ran into Francisco Sanchez, a comrade from La Tribuna, the People's Theatre. With some satisfaction he told me, 'Two of our fellows have died at the front. . . .'" Again: "It was already very late . . . at that time of day the sound of the machine guns gets to be like that of a thick soup boiling and bubbling in some immense cauldron."

And: "I was once a man with feelings and I will become one again." And: "He was a jolly fellow, extremely clever. Everyone liked him, but now he is forgotten, at least until the war is over. It is three days now since he was lost."

From Spanish Trenches is not the first or the last of eye-witness narratives. I can imagine more representative collections, one in which the professional writers do not have the best of it as they do in this volume. But it will be valuable to the future historian of the International Brigade.

V. S. PRITCHETT

PERSONALITY PARADE

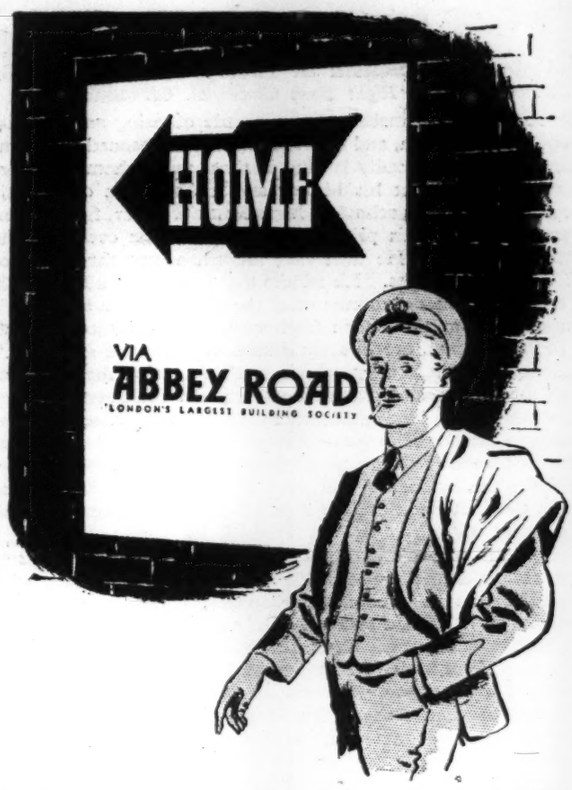
It Occurs to Me. By LORD ELTON. *Collins.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

This little book of what Lord Elton calls "Wireless Causeries" is instructive as a social symptom. The purpose of the talks is revealed in the preface:

> The distresses of Ruritania, the perils of the juvenile water-beetle, constantly demand the attention of the listening public. Each evening the News Bulletin discusses them anew. There are many who welcome a temporary return to a simpler, more familiar and less alarming world.

To speak words of comfort is Lord Elton's admirable purpose; and the sociological interest is in the methods he employs.

The traditional sermon in times of distress declared the power of God, the necessity of amendment, the vanity of earthly life and the infinite mercy of Christ. But Lord Elton is wiser in his generation: he seeks to console us by incessant talk about himself. The personality which he so artfully parades is a wonderful piece of work. He is, of course, a Peer as well as a scholar, and he is careful to remind us that he is familiar with Cabinet Ministers and men whose names are known all over the world. But he keeps insisting that at heart he is a simple, puzzled, unpretentious chap



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like the rest of us. He is not well off, his car is old, he cannot afford to spend a guinea on silk stockings for his wife, he wears very disreputable old clothes. He is the sort of person who sits on top hats. Indeed, he most candidly confesses to all these failings of which he is not ashamed. He is unmusical, though he likes a good tune. He is unskilful at anything with his hands (and sometimes wonders why). He has never been to a cup-tie or the Derby. He cannot understand Mr. Eliot's *Waste Land*—but this is a virtue: "that sort of writing seems to me profoundly undemocratic." And Lord Elton is nothing if not a democrat. He does not like "the clever novels produced by highbrows (all so closely resembling each other)"—which is quite comprehensible if in his eyes Mrs. Woolf and Mr. Joyce and Miss Compton-Burnett and Proust and Mr. Forster all appear so alike. Critics he particularly deplores: most of them are critics chiefly because they can't write best-sellers themselves, and art-critics understand less about painting than other people. As for contemporary art, Goebbels could hardly be more emphatic: "There are times when it is the duty of the simplest of us, the plainest of plain citizens, to be critical. It is because not enough plain citizens have the courage to say what they think, that this sort of absurdity is perpetrated." But do not suppose that he is a Philistine: he quotes Aristotle twice, he doesn't think that *If Winter Comes* was a particularly good book, "certainly not so good, I should say, as one or two of his earlier novels." He refers airily to Dutch Primitives and Tudor Cathedrals, he "happens to be specially interested in old furniture," and if he won the Calcutta Sweep, what would he do? "I am afraid what I always think of first is a grey old house, and the gradual filling of it with exactly the right furniture and exactly the right pictures."

Lord Elton, whose Christian name is Godfrey, does not talk much about religion. But he comes well up to scratch about flowers and dogs. He owns an "adorably provoking garden," and chooses his adjectives with particular care when appreciating nature: "the deep, tender, shining greens of the absurd, tidy, English fields, the poignant shy green of young larches, the first mist of shrill spring green on the hedges." Then there are no fewer than three dogs—an elk-hound puppy, an old fox-terrier called Scrap and a collie called Lossie, which is shown, in the frontispiece, romping with the recumbent author. The mother-love theme, so successfully exploited by his rivals, he has the good feeling to omit, but he gets ahead again with a lot about his son, Rodney, and his two little girls. He evidently sees nothing embarrassing in this—"shyness isn't really a *national* characteristic"—but I should find it embarrassing to quote, or comment upon, such intimacies.

Here is the author's summary of his own achievement:

> I have preferred, for the most part, to talk of simpler and perhaps more enduring things—the chances and mischances of ordinary family life, the leaves which have fallen through autumn sunlight since time began, the cloud shadows moving on the ancient hillside, or the laughter of a child in a garden, which is suddenly the laughter of children in gardens long ago.

This is every bit as good as A. C. Benson. Indeed, nobody can deny the skill shown in these fragrant "causeries." Each of them is as carefully constructed as the meanderings of an artificial brook in a landscape garden; the final sentence is apt to repeat a phrase that has come earlier and with which the author is particularly pleased. Lulled by these flattering confidences, listeners must have felt that all was for the best under the best of all possible Prime Ministers; they could forget what Lord Elton calls "Ruritania." (This name was nicely calculated to make the value to us of Czechoslovakia and the agonies of its people seem unreal.) Of course, we need to escape from political thoughts and fears, to be reminded that Dictators pass, while love, nature, art and learning remain. Poetry and music can give us courage to face ugly facts, but these talks are about as bracing as a Tudor tea-house. To rise into the world of permanent values is one thing, to watch Lord Elton strip-teasing is another.

English essayists from Steele to Lynd have delighted us with talk of themselves, but not till recently have men and women cashed in weekly on what should be their most intimate feelings. We all know that in fact Lord Elton is a serious scholar and was, at any rate until he earned his peerage, a serious politician; in these talks he exhibits himself as the Man in the Suburb, considerably idealised and become articulate. It is natural that picture-papers should wish to "build up" such cosy personalities, day-dream figures with which their readers can identify themselves; but is it necessary, or healthy, for Broadcasting House to follow this example?

RAYMOND MORTIMER

EYES RIGHT!

Revolutionary Socialism in Theory and Practice. By ARNOLD LUNN. *Right Book Club.* 2s. 6d. to members.

Mr. Arnold Lunn makes a great parade of being an impartial and objective historian, and of a veneration for reasoned argument which he finds to be sadly lacking in those with whom he enters into controversy; but his history and his methods of analysis belong in truth to the school of Mrs. Nesta Webster, from whom he quotes freely as his principal authority on the events of the French Revolution. He does not, indeed, accept the whole of Mrs. Webster's theories. He admits that it is only "a hypothesis that the revolutionary movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as the Italian Carbonari, the First International, and the Comintern, are directly descended from the *illuminati*." He admits that "it is a hypothesis, not a fact, that the *illuminati* are still in existence and in secret control of the world revolutionary movement." But, having admitted this, he is not deterred from including a prolonged denunciation of Weishaupt and Illuminati as if it had some relevance to the movements of the present day. He justifies this by arguing that, even if there is no direct historical descent, the Left Book Club is at any rate very like the *illuminati*, and quite as wicked.

The greater part of Mr. Lunn's book is taken up by a series of violent attacks on the Soviet Union and on Republican Spain, with a plentiful seasoning of atrocity stories, mainly drawn from Trotskyite and Catholic sources. Only in the closing sections is there much argument, when Mr. Lunn comes to a brief discussion of the theoretical basis of Marxism and of the Communist conception of society. In this section he draws plentifully on Professor von Mises and on Mr. Joseph's attack on the Marxian theory of value. Throughout the book Mr. Lunn naturally finds it easy to light upon stupid remarks made by advocates of one or another of the numerous causes which he lumps together on the basis of a common dislike. Babeuf, Fourier, and Weishaupt, Robespierre and Hébert, share with Lenin, Stalin, Largo Caballero, Mr. John Strachey and the Dean of Canterbury the place of honour in his kaleidoscopic pages. Where so much mud is slung some is bound to stick, and I daresay some of the members of the Right Book Club will be much encouraged by Mr. Lunn; but he is himself an extreme example of the vice which he chastises in others—of treating all the evidence he likes as gospel, and ignoring everything said on the opposite side, except when he can catch his enemy momentarily napping.

G. D. H. COLE

PAGAN IDOL

The Rise of a Pagan State: Japan's Religious Background. By A. MORGAN YOUNG. *Allen and Unwin.* 7s. 6d.

No one has written more informingly about contemporary Japan than Mr. Morgan Young, whose first two books, taken together, are probably the best introduction in English to a subject too often neglected in this country. Now the same author has given us a valuable complementary study of the growth of the Emperor-myth in Japan, and the way in which it has been used in our own time to launch a whole people on the dangerous path of world conquest.

It is a story which must come with something of a shock to any reader who is unprepared for it, or who still considers the worship of the Mikado a harmless piece of Oriental symbolism. On February 11th, 1940—if the Sun Goddess still smiles on them—the Japanese will be celebrating, though without the coveted additional attraction of the Olympic Games, what Mr. Young picturesquely calls the "Oldest Lie in the World." For this is the 2,600th anniversary of the first "Heavenly Ruler" Jimmu, direct descendant of *Ama-terasu-o-mi-kami*, whose grandchild, bearing the three divine treasures of "the jewel, the sword, and the mirror," descended to earth in the seventh century B.C. to rule the "fertile rice-ear land" of Japan.

Modern historians—including a few daring Japanese scholars, who have usually paid dearly for their temerity—are agreed that the earliest possible date for the consolidation of an empire in Japan is somewhere in the fourth century A.D.; but that is heresy, and the old myth is still solemnly taught in all Japanese schools. The Heavenly Ruler himself, with a few remarkable exceptions in widely scattered reigns, has been little more than a puppet of powerful temporal forces throughout the known history of Japan; yet to-day he is God, and all that is done in his

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name is sacred. Mr. Young demonstrates clearly that the original falsification of history, in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon-shoki*, was contrived primarily for political purposes; and it is the greatest merit of his conscientious essay that it reveals—to the confusion of sentimental admirers of Japanese patriotism and loyalty as a natural and essentially religious phenomenon—the cynical elaboration of State Shinto and Emperor-worship into a perfect instrument of the Japanese ruling class.

The Incarnate Deity who occupies the Imperial Palace at Tokyo to-day is probably the wealthiest landowner and capitalist in Japan; and of the Three Imperial Treasures the greatest of all is the Sword, which has become the emblem of a modern State Army in which he rules. Mr. Young has one especially interesting chapter on the "Japanese as Head-hunters," which should be prescribed reading for any who still cherish romantic notions about *Bushido* as a cult of chivalry, and such "heroic" survivals as the tradition of *hara-kiri*. Altogether, this book is a notable exposure of one of the greatest religious frauds in history; and one wishes that it could be translated and sold openly in Japan, where its effects would be more shattering than any earthquake.

The immediate value of the book, as I see it, is in political rather than religious exposition; and for this reason it might with advantage have been written in a more popular style. As a study of Japanese religion in general, it must necessarily seem inadequate: much of it is compilation, and the author certainly does less than justice to such specifically Japanese developments as Zen Buddhism. Indeed, it is not very clear, from the impartial distribution of his indignation, whether Mr. Young himself writes from the point of view of a Christian or of a free-thinker. But no one can fail to be impressed by the strength of his indictment of a State religion that is as cynical as it is dangerous; and few to-day would challenge his serious conclusion: ". . . the amount of harm that can be done by a Power with the ambitions of Japan, and these ambitions bound up with a fanatical belief in a God-Emperor and the divine right of the army to speak and act for him, is incalculable." And another conclusion follows from this: only when the Emperor-myth has been smashed by a free Japanese people, will the course of modern Japan "cease to resemble that hideous pagan idol, who would not drink the nectar, but from the skulls of the slain." JAMES BERTRAM

ROMANTIC TRAVELLERS

Karavan. By NILS AMBOLT. Translated by JOAN BULMAN. *Blackie.* 15*s.*

Eastern Visas. By AUDREY HARRIS. *Collins.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Two youthful and engaging personalities gaze out wide-eyed from the pages of two pleasant travel-books. Dr. Nils Ambolt is a Scandinavian scientist who has followed in the footsteps of a famous explorer and revered master, Dr. Sven Hedin, across the mountains, deserts and steppes of Central Asia. *Karavan* is neither the first nor the best volume of its kind to appear in English. Its appeal is definitely and deliberately a popular one; as a result of the narrative having been broken up into a large number of brief and brightly written episodes, the exact outline of the author's journeys is often hard to trace; but there is considerable charm in the panorama of scenes described. Desert country has a peculiar effect on the imagination; and Dr. Ambolt manages to convey the curious hushed, at times deathly and almost phantasmal, beauty of those vast Central Asian landscapes, gigantic mountain ranges, wildernesses of sand and shingle, fertile oases where, after many days' riding through prospects of arid lunar desolation, the traveller may find himself in a cool rustling paradise of mulberry and peach orchards and poplar groves, among vegetable gardens watered by clear canals.

Dr. Ambolt's style throughout is brisk and appreciative. He deals lightly with the discomforts and ennuis of travel, dwells at length on the fascination of the places he has visited, gives agreeable pictures of Chinese, Turki and Kirghiz. He does not sentimentalise the conditions of nomad existence; yet it is evident that the blue-eyed bearded explorer, with his romantic awareness both of natural beauties and of the common human virtues, was very much at home in the society of these good-natured tribesmen. Dr. Ambolt's reasons for visiting Asia were entirely practical: he had been commissioned to conduct a survey, geographical and meteorological, in a part of the world that has been seldom explored and is still largely unmapped. Miss Harris, on the other hand, is the leisured globe-trotter. But she did not journey in such comfort as to muffle her sensitiveness and, indeed, derived a certain extra zest from the hardships she suffered. For Miss Harris is an exceedingly serious and thoughtful young woman. As she herself points out in her first paragraph, she "did nothing that anyone could not have done," given time, opportunity, an indulgent parent, a strong digestion and an aptitude for making friends. Her book has had many predecessors and will have many successors. It is distinguished, however, by a strain of open-mindedness and enquiring honesty—mercifully undiluted by literary artifice—which makes it possible for her to be naive without becoming pompous, and inaccurate and superficial yet fresh and amusing. Typical of Miss Harris is her lively account of a journey "hard" across Siberia and the resolution she then formed that never, in any circumstances, would she consent to travel first class. In the same arduous spirit, she made her way down through Korea to Japan, from Japan to China, past the Great Wall to Jehol (where she found part of the Emperor Ch'ien Lung's theatrical wardrobe mouldering to dust in a derelict outbuilding), up the Yangtse, into Tibet, Nepal and Afghanistan. Yes, anybody could have done what Miss Harris did, but not all travellers could have done it with so good a grace—as unaffectedly as if she were on a reading party during the summer vacation, and the Gorges of the Yangtse were the Lake District and Afghanistan Cumberland. True, she is not good at history and poor at proper names; but these feminine inaccuracies give her style its flavour. She would be not nearly so nice if she were more meticulous.

PETER QUENNELL

THE CHRISTIAN IN POLITICS

True Humanism. By JACQUES MARITAIN. *Bles.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

An important phenomenon of recent times is a widespread feeling that the Church ought to "do something." It is not a notably articulate feeling; but it is surprising how often it is expressed in private conversations, and by the most diversified and unlikely people. Resentment of the Church's alleged silence, and criticism of occasional pronouncements by bishops, alike indicate a predisposition to listen. There may be scant agreement as to what the Church ought to do, but it is—by inference—considered to have a responsibility and the potential means of useful action. Now this marks a change from the Fabians, who presumably neither expected nor desired the Church to do anything at all except wither away, after a final period of intensive contribution to *This England*. We are beginning to learn that our political problems, so far from being confined to terms of technical adjustment, have deep philosophical roots. They are involved in fundamental questions of the purpose of life, the nature of virtue, the value of individual personality. Sitting in our ruins we are involuntary Utopians, forced by circumstances to begin at the foundations since there is nothing in our social fabric which stands above question. Whatever value we put upon the Church, we must recognise that it speaks a language relevant to our speculations. We can reject it, but we cannot treat it as nonsense.

There can be little doubt that M. Jacques Maritain is the most distinguished lay exponent of Catholic doctrine. In *True Humanism* he turns his attention to politics and adumbrates a specifically Christian attitude to the problems which confront us all; and in doing so, he has written a book which may well be as valuable for non-churchgoers as for the faithful. M. Maritain thinks in theological terms, which are unfamiliar to some of us, but he is not addressing an esoteric audience. He speaks to all those who retain a certain disinterest and human goodwill. He is himself a temperate and tolerant man, though not with the kind of tolerating opportunism that springs from flabby and lightly held convictions. Like a good duellist, he is at once scrupulous and unsparing: qualities which are well illustrated in this passage:—

> However grave its errors and illusions have been, Socialism in the nineteenth century was a protest uttered by the human conscience, and of its most generous instincts, against evils which cry to heaven. It was a noble work to bring capitalist civilisation to trial and to waken against powers which know no pardon, the sense of justice and of the dignity of labour: and in this work it took the initiative. It has fought a hard and difficult battle at the cost of innumerable sacrifices, filled with the most moving of human qualities, the self-sacrifice of the poor. It has loved the poor. We can only criticise it effectively while remaining at many points in its debt.

M. Maritain analyses the root-connection between Communism and atheism, and underlines the consequences of this connection.

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LILLI PALMER CECIL PARKER in
IAN HAY'S New Comedy HIT
LITTLE LADYSHIP

APOLLO. (GERrard 2663)
Evenings, 8.30. Matinees, Tues. & Sat., 2.30
GAS LIGHT
GWEN FFRANGCON-DAVIES

CRITERION. (WHI. 3844.) EVENINGS at 8.40.
Matinees, TUESDAY & SATURDAY, 2.30.
RONALD SQUIRE. KAY HAMMOND in
SUGAR PLUM. A LIGHT COMEDY.

DRURY LANE. (TEMple Bar 7171.)
Evenings, 8.0. Mats., Wed. & Sat., 2.30.
MARY ELLIS and IVOR NOVELLO
THE DANCING YEARS
Devised, Written and Composed by Ivor Novello.

DUCHESS. (Tem. 8243.) Evgs., 8.30. Wed., Sat., 2.30.
SYBIL THORNDIKE and EMLYN WILLIAMS in
THE CORN IS GREEN
A Comedy by EMLYN WILLIAMS.

OLD VIC. (WATERLOO 6336.) 6*d.* to 7*s.* 6*d.*
Mon., 8.0, SHAKESPEARE BIRTHDAY FESTIVAL.
Evgs. (exc. Mon.) at 8.0. Mats., Thurs. & Sat., 2.30
THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

PALACE. Ger. 6834. Evgs., 8.15. Wed., Sat., 2.30.
LEE EPHRAIM PRESENTS
JACK HULBERT and CICELY COURTNEIDGE in
UNDER YOUR HAT

PLAYHOUSE. (Whi. 7774). EVGS., 8.30 (ex. Mons.)
Matinees, WED., THURS., SAT., 2.30.
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KAREL CAPEK'S LAST PLAY.

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ST. JAMES. (Whi. 3903.) Evenings at 8.15.
MATINEES, WEDNESDAY, SATURDAY, 2.30.
BERNARD SHAW'S play of the moment
GENEVA

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George Bernard Shaw.

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Lot's Wife. Peter Blackmore.

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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS
Rates and all information on page 627

In his analysis of Fascism, M. Maritain re-states his refusal to regard Franco as a divinely-sent crusader; he finds in Fascism the other pole of the atheism of Marx. Capitalist democracy, Communism and Fascism are scrutinised in turn and rejected. In M. Maritain's view they are leading us to a world "habitable only by beasts or by gods."

At this point, M. Maritain attempts to extricate those elements of truth and decent aspiration which he sees enmeshed in the errors bred in each party by resentment, fear and muddled thinking. He is rigorously opposed to capitalism as we know it, to a system which regards human beings as "hands," and he considers the abolition of capitalism as a prerequisite of any notable reform; but he does not favour complete collectivisation (especially in agriculture). I have not the space to give an adequate summary of all M. Maritain's proposals, but I can characterise them approximately as a Christian Socialism modified by the older landed Tory philosophy which the financiers submerged. I suspect that these may well prove to be the two best elements in our civilisation since the mediaeval break-up, and here M. Maritain is propounding a fruitful synthesis.

It may be objected that M. Maritain's proposals are less specific than they should be. He says nothing about the control of credit, the fixing of wages, the complications of an economy based upon export and foreign investment. There is indeed scarcely any reference to economic problems. M. Maritain meets this objection by claiming that, as a philosopher, his concern is with broad lines of conduct. So far from offering a panacea, he expects disagreements as to right means within the framework of his general precepts. In virtue of his faith, he has no obligation to budget for an earthly paradise, a final perfection in human affairs: a dispensation which he converts into a masterly indictment of modern Caesars:—

> We are given the double commandment, first to devote all our energies to the raising of the level of goodness and justice in the current stuff of history . . . and secondly, not to act as if it was our office, in the endeavour to separate the wheat and the tares, *to close the account* and so the very movement of historical existence in which we live: in other words, not to constitute ourselves at each instant the auditors of God's judgment on history.

In its essential humility and in the integrity of its endeavour, *True Humanism* is a deeply challenging book. Even in disagreement, and abetted by an uncomfortable translation, it would be impossible not to be impressed by the nobility and lucidity of M. Maritain's argument. Those who wish to understand the Christian attitude to contemporary politics will find it here, expressed with an exacting precision which must spur the reader to clarify and sharpen his own beliefs. DESMOND HAWKINS

THE WILSONIAN TOUCH

Woodrow Wilson. Vol. VII. By R. STANNARD BAKER. *Heinemann.* 21s.

The seventh volume of Mr. Stannard Baker's Life of Woodrow Wilson has a special topical interest at a moment when, twenty years after America's rejection of the League, another Democratic President is attempting to rally the nations of the world to collective resistance against aggression. Mr. Baker has decided to make this volume a diary day by day of the President's life from April 6th, 1917, when America declared war, to February, 1918, when Russian peace propaganda forced him to publish the Fourteen Points, and has given it the sub-title "War-leader." But in fact, after eleven months America was hardly in the war, and one of the last entries records General Pershing's annoyance that newspapers were describing thousands of American aeroplanes flying above American forces when "as a matter of fact there is not to-day a single American-made plane in Europe." In spite of Wilson's zeal, America was even more dilatory than Great Britain in mobilising her resources for war.

But it is clear from the evidence collected in this volume that this delay was not due, as Mr. Lloyd George suggests in his *War Diaries*, to the President's character as a man of peace. The legend that Wilson was a high-minded and impractical idealist, incapable of quick decision and unversed in the arts of politics, a visionary pacifist revolted by force and fraud, has been partly created by Mr. Baker himself in earlier writings, but it is being slowly destroyed by each successive volume of this monumental biography. Wilson *was* a high-minded idealist, but he was also a high-handed politician who wanted to run the war himself; and he was as narrow-minded in his refusal of Republican co-operation as he was fanatical in his determination to crush German militarism. By turning the U.S.A. into a popular autocracy, under exclusive Democratic control, he sowed the seeds of that bitter party controversy which resulted in the defeat of his party at the polls in November, 1918, and the resultant rejection by the Senate of American membership of the League. It was not Wilson's pacifism which held America back, but his decision to win the war off his own party bat.

We find this narrow partisanship also in his attitude to England. He suspected the Balfour mission and wished to prevent it, the British Admiralty he regarded as hopelessly purblind, and his attitude to the Supreme War Council is summed up in a letter to Lansing: "I must say I am afraid of any expression of policy framed jointly at Paris. There has been none yet that seemed to me even touched with wisdom. I see that you have sought to suggest and safeguard, but I am afraid that statesmen like our friend, L. G., will not care to be guided." Determined that there should be no peace until America had won the war, was aghast at the Lansdowne letter and prevented the participation of Americans in the Stockholm conference. In September, 1917, he wrote: "All discussions of peace at this time, so long as the German Government remains so stubbornly insincere and impossible, are unwise."

How did Wilson envisage this victory of democracy? To answer this question, we must understand the streak of fanatical simplicity in Wilson's mind and his profound ignorance of social forces. With ingenuous optimism he welcomed the February Revolution as the beginning of democracy in Russia, and, on the advice of Samuel Gompers, regarded the Bolsheviks as pro-German agitators and refused to follow France's lead in guaranteeing them American military aid if they resisted Germany. Almost at the moment when in the Fourteen Points he was promising to the Russian people a free development, he was agreeing to a Japanese occupation of Eastern Siberia. Both in Germany and Russia in fact he seems to have envisaged the possibility that the overthrow of tyranny would be followed by an easy transition to capitalist democracy. In a very real sense he thought of victory not only as a victory of the U.S.A. and its President over the Kaiser, but of Americanism over reactionary Europe, and because he hated Socialism, he resolutely fought all those forces which might really have stamped out militarism in the Central Powers. If the Supreme War Council was "not even touched with poison," the mind of the President differed only in the quality of its delusions.

Another myth dissipated by Mr. Baker is the idea (suggested by Wilson himself) that he was unaware till after the war of the secret treaties. All the most important were shown to him by Mr. Balfour early in 1917, and it is clear that Wilson did not discuss them because he believed that after the victory he would have the Allied statesmen under his control. Writing to House, he uses these illuminating words: "When the war is over we can force them to our way of thinking *because by that time, among other things, they will be financially in our hands; but we cannot force them now.*" Determined to prevent all discussion of peace terms till after the war was won, he began to practise that duplicity which was to prove so fatal at Versailles. When Italy expressed anxiety about the meaning of the Fourteen Points, he squared the Italian Ambassador by assuring him that "failing a League of Nations my mind would be open upon all such matters. There is nothing to alarm the Italian people." Here already we see the beginning of the process which led to the absorption of South Tirol by Italy without a protest from Wilson. Even in the matter of the League, we find the President's point of view remarkably vague. He acknowledges on July 25th, 1917, the receipt of Brailsford's book, *A League of Nations*, from Senator Borah, but on August 3rd he still describes the League, in a letter to the French President, "as an evolution rather than a creation by a formal convention . . . the practice of co-operation would naturally spring up and in the end produce something which would in effect be a regularly constituted and employed concert of nations." This vagueness was not due to idealism but to his conviction that, if only the League idea could be left unprecise till after the war, it could then be realised in any form desired by the American President.

Such was the war-leader who regarded himself as the man destined to save the world from the ravages of European reaction. With superhuman principles and very human methods, able and yet obtuse, he talked like a preacher and acted like an autocratic party politician. It is interesting to speculate what a man of the genial adaptability of Roosevelt would have made of the job. Perhaps his chance will come. R. H. S. CROSSMAN

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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS
Rates and all information on page 627

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The Flat Book. By J. L. MARTIN and S. SPEIGHT. *Heinemann.* 5s.

This book is remarkably well planned. The authors, two architects, discuss shortly the principles upon which a flat should be equipped, and the body of the book is occupied by hundreds of photographs, with captions giving the prices and the manufacturers of the objects illustrated. Great care has obviously been taken to find respectable examples of mass-produced modern furniture. The authors are puritanical in their taste, as is now the fashion especially among architects, and the rooms illustrated are notable for their hygienic appearance. A sitting-room or bedroom, since its function is to provide comfort, should look comfortable. These rooms do not. The style favoured in this book is, in fact, unfunctional, because it imposes a bathroom appearance upon the whole flat. Only Robots or very totalitarian-minded people could live, one would suppose, in such impersonal and unintimate surroundings. It is significant that none of the Allan Walton fabrics are included: these are designed by individual painters, and would introduce a sinful touch of fantasy and individuality into the ascetic scheme. But the book can be heartily recommended to fanatics of "modernity," and the rest of us will find much that is useful in it, especially in the sections dealing with kitchens and bathrooms. The authors' remarks about colour are very sensible; and if their fear of making rooms "restless" seems to amount to a neurosis, the practical information conveyed is extremely useful.

The Nature of Creative Activity. By VIKTOR LÖWENFELD. *Kegan Paul.* 21s.

There have been many fascinating inquiries into the nature and origin of creative activity, but nearly all have been based upon an assumption of sensory normality in the creator. In other words, in a consideration of the plastic arts, normal sight has at least been assumed in the artist. In view of this Professor Lowenfeld's approach is startlingly novel. His new book, *The Nature of Creative Activity*, is a record of a series of experiments performed over a number of years on blind or weak-sighted subjects—most of them children—and his analyses of their numerous productions in different media are of value both to the psychologist and to the aesthetician. Basing himself upon his experiments, he was able to classify all representational art as falling into one of two categories; the visual, or the haptic. In the former, the artist, relying upon the "visualising" faculty, attempts to reproduce what he sees before him. In the latter, relying upon his other senses, mainly, of course, that of touch, he attempts to exteriorise his inner conception of things. It is impossible in a short space to enter into a full discussion of Professor Löwenfeld's theory. It should be pointed out, however, that the division of all art into "visual" and "haptic" types is in reality only a variation on the old familiar theme of "objective" and "subjective" modes of expression. There is therefore more novelty in the method of approach than in the ultimate conclusions. In spite of this, the serious student will undoubtedly be justified in considering *The Nature of Creative Activity* as a significant contribution to the literature of psycho-aesthetics. On the other hand, the interest of the general reader will probably be centred in the striking series of illustrations, chosen from the work of his pupils, and testifying—particularly in the case of certain busts by congenitally blind subjects—to a very unusual creative impulse.

Week-end Competitions

No. 477

Set by William Whitebait

We offer the usual prizes (two guineas and half a guinea) for the best poem (not longer than 24 lines) on the London telephone directory.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, April 28th.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 475

Set by John Mair

Garrick gained some notoriety by changing the ending of *Lear* to suit the taste of his own age. The usual prizes are offered for similar alterations (of not more than 300 words) to the ends of *Lear*, *Hamlet* or *Othello*, to suit the tastes either of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Noel Coward, Auden-and-Isherwood, the *Daily Mirror* or of the B.B.C. (for broadcasting, and so as not to offend anyone's susceptibilities). It may be noted that Garrick did his best to reproduce the Bard's own style, though not with any marked success.

Report by John Mair

Like Garrick, the majority of competitors went for a happy ending, and Cordelia, Desdemona and Ophelia were revived and presented to their desperate lovers by the familiar methods of a film climax. M.G.M. was most favoured for the re-writing, and its alternatives ranged from the supreme sacrifice:

Ham.: Now dear Ophelia, good Horatio
Do marry with my blessing. I, alas,
Must to appease the Poles with Fortinbras (*Claudius*),

to a grand all-singing finale with the misty-eyed blond King (Aubrey Smith) blessing the young couple. To M.G.M., too, A. D. Webb attributed the superbly tactful line:

"It is I, Hamlet the Esperantist!"

Noel Coward was not such a popular choice, though I liked M. Butler's "O! too much hanky-panky!" while the only good *Daily Mirror* (Charles Furbank) held the *Mirror* up, but not to Shakespeare. L. W. Bailey, Mary Trent, "Arthur," and J. B. all had their moments, but all lacked the courage of the situation. The point of the competition was to combine Shakespeare's style with contemporary taste and idiom; thus I ruled out any entries not at least partly in blank verse, and also any in which the modernisation was confined wholly to the plot. I suggest the prizes be divided 60 : 40 (1½ guineas and 1 guinea) between L. V. Upward and Basil Forbes, both of whom come near to fulfilling the conditions I intended.

FIRST PRIZE

Othello, Act V, Sc. 2 (M.G.M. version)

Oth.: Lady, you are to die, and by my hand;
Your pranks with Cassio are known to me.
Des.: Why, sweetikins, you're wrong! I'm innocent!
Oth.: No lies, girl! Face your Maker with clean lips!
(*Picks up pillow. Desdemona screams. Enter Emilia.*)
Em.: Put down that pillow, Moor! What's the idea?
Oth.: My wife must die; she is as false as Hell!
Em.: You've got her wrong, Othello, by my life.
Oth.: No, I have not. Your husband knows the truth.
Em.: But doesn't tell it. Look! I found a note
From Roderigo in his dressing-gown,
Which proves how Desdemona has been framed!
Oth.: What's this? (*Snatches note.*) Oh, villain! I will have his blood!
Em.: Too late, Othello. He has hopped a ship
That left for India two hours ago.
Iago was a rat; but he is still
My husband. I just had to let him know
That I would tell you of his dirty tricks,
Giving him time to make his getaway.
Oth.: I cannot blame you. But I would have liked
To lay my hands upon his greasy throat.
Oh, Desdemona, will you, pray, forgive
An accusation filthy as 'twas false?
Des.: Why, by my halidom, my sugar lord,
I know that what you did was done for love.
Love calls for no forgiveness even when
Its form is brutal. Talk not of forgiving.
Oth.: Oh, honey heart, kinder than I deserve,
Too generous, more sweet than candy is!
I vow that all my future life shall pay
For that which you have suffered here to-day!
(*Embrace. Curtain.*) L. V. UPWARD

SECOND PRIZE.

((Presumably Auden-Isherwood version)

Othello: Iago: Chorus of Venetians. There is no sign of Desdemona, but this may be the fault of Mr. D———'s lighting.

Oth.: This is no moment for the personal gesture,
To ape the Scout or flap the Kestrel's wing,
To re-enact Aleppo's upper-cut
Or boast enormous Asia. Nor recall
The praises of the weasels I have served,
No, nor to argue Dante with the worms.
Chorus: Oh he belonged to another age
When sword and laurel were all the rage;
He served himself as he served the state,
Now he's served one fault too many and he's out of date.
Here comes Science with his rifle and protractor
And Culture with a medal for tempora acta,
A quarto tribute from a Cambridge don,
A bow from posterity—and then he's gone.
Iago: To do the hard thing is simplicity,
To find forgotten tracks up hidden hills,
To plot in gasworks, execute a spy,
Or with his niblick strike the Major down.
To cock significant snooks at horrid alps,
Or in the dripping culvert read the rune.
All this is easy. But to talk in sense
Or understand our week-end party line
Is near impossible.

APPOINTMENTS VACANT & WANTED

DR. WILLIAMS' ENDOWED SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, DOLGELLEY.

Applications are invited for the post of Headmistress, which will become vacant at the end of the Spring Term, 1940.

Applicants must hold an Honours Degree in Arts or Science of a British University. Boarding school experience is desirable. The salary offered is £750 per annum resident.

The School is recognised by the Board of Education. It was founded in 1875, the endowment dating from 1711. There is accommodation for 200 boarders and 100 day girls.

Applications, together with twenty copies each of not more than three testimonials (to be typewritten or printed) should be sent to the Clerk to the Governors, Dr. Williams' School, Dolgelley, not later than Monday, May 22nd. No special forms of application are supplied.

FABIAN SOCIETY AND NEW FABIAN RESEARCH BUREAU.

Applications are invited for the post of Research Secretary at a salary of £200 p.a., commencing about the end of June, 1939. Will be responsible for organisation of research and some original research, from a Socialist standpoint. Details from the GENERAL SECRETARY, 37 Great James Street, W.C.1. Final applications to be in by the 1st of May.

PINEWOOD wants teacher for nursery group—see school advertisement *N.S. & N.*

TEMPORARY assistance to complete research required. Shorthand, typing essential. Only small remuneration possible. Seaside. Box 4687.

TRAINEE required for expanding Nursery Group Lyndale School, Eton Avenue. PRI. 6466.

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT. (24), strong progressive views, seeks administrative post London or provinces, with well established progressive or social organisation. Commencing salary £208 p.a. Write Box 812, Reynells', 44 Chancery Lane, W.C.2.

YOUNG man (24), athletic, cultured, Public School, Scottish University, Modern Languages First, seeks interesting post. Would travel. Box 4677.

BARGAIN. Widely experienced Journalist/Secretary (27) offers services to progressive employer or organisation. Minimum wage. Maximum responsibility and risk welcomed. Box 4671.

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MISTRESS, B.A. Hons. English Oxon, seeks post September, progressive school, London district. Coeducational experience. Box 4703.

MAN (33), logical intelligence, futile job, wants useful work. Oxford hon. degree, languages. Prefer economic or psychological research assistantship. Small salary. W., 35 Water Lane, E.C.4.

COMPETENT Secretary. Parliamentary, professional and commercial experience seeks post as private secretary. Go anywhere. Box 4724.

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LARGE garden room, box room, kitchen, c.h.w.; lovely outlook (S.S.E.). 27*s*. 6*d*. incl. Primrose 1043

CULTURED Hungarian woman Liberal invites holiday paying guests in Budapest flat. Box 4616

LADY wishes to recommend attractive cottage on village green Esher (Surrey), where Frenchwoman (English by marriage) will take paying guests and if desired, give expert lessons in cooking or French. Reasonable terms. Box 4705.

MODERN beautifully furnished large double room vacant. Bachelor's flat off Baker Street. All conveniences. PAD. 8374.

SINGLE divan room, redecorated, large window overlooking garden. 15*s*. Private house; kitchen. Primrose 6534.

COUNTRY-LOVING man offered week-end home, comfortable Bucks cottage. Reasonable. 'Phone: (week-ends) Hampden Row 75.

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Oth.: Oh I remember once
When hiking with a comrade through the Fells
I laid my arm across his shoulder—thus!
(*He does so. Iago's mask falls away and he stands revealed as Othello's mother.*)
Oth.: Mother! (*Falls on his knees before her. Stage grows dark.*)
Mother: Rest quiet my baby. In your cliché
No spy or traitor Is coming this way
Louis may come. And Cecil may pass
But junctions and pylons Are more lasting than brass . . .
(*Slow curtain*). BASIL FORBES

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 329.—CANTATA

A letter from a schoolgirl suggests an exercise in deduction—not so difficult as many I have offered lately.

"Our form next term is presenting a little cantata. The characters are supposed to be five girls, named Joan, Myra, Clare, Sally and Lois.

"Five girls are playing these parts and, strange to say, they have the same five names. But none of them is playing the part of her own namesake. As the thing was planned originally, two girls were going to do so, but they were subsequently asked to exchange parts.

Human nature is very perverse, don't you think? Joan wanted to play the part of Myra, and Myra wanted to play the part of Clare; both had to be satisfied with something different.

"The best part—that of Lois—is played by the namesake of the part played by Sally."

What rôle has been allotted to each of the five performers?

PROBLEM 327—THE MATHEMATICAL EXHIBITION

Solution by Malcolm Thomson

Triggo coloured the four dice as follows:

	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)
Red Sides ..	5	5	3	1
Blue Sides ..	1	1	3	5

WORKING:

If on four parti-coloured dice, the numbers of sides coloured red are respectively a, b, c and d, then the numbers of sides coloured blue will be $6-a$, $6-b$, $6-c$, and $6-d$ respectively.

The chances of all four dice simultaneously turning up red sides are $a \times b \times c \times d$. The chances of all turning up blue are similarly $(6-a) \times (6-b) \times (6-c) \times (6-d)$.

Triggo has to colour the sides of the dice in such a way that $abcd = 5(6-a)(6-b)(6-c)(6-d)$. He does this if one factor in the first expression—say, a—is 5, making the corresponding factor in the second expression—$6-a$—to be 1, and if the product of the other three factors in the first equals that of the other three factors in the second expression.

There are three ways of colouring the 4 dice to achieve this result, viz.:

	A	B	C
Red ..	5 3 3 3	5 4 3 2	5 5 3 1
Blue ..	1 3 3 3	1 2 3 4	1 1 3 5

Triggo's object naturally is to choose between these three the arrangement which gives him the longest odds against his rival of getting four or three reds, compared with the chances of four or three blues turning up.

The respective numbers of chances of getting three or four Reds, or three or four Blues, under each of these arrangements, are:

Arrangement	Chances of 3 or 4 Reds	Chances of 3 or 4 Blues	Odds in Triggo's Favour
A	567	243	2.333 : 1
B	564	228	2.473 : 1
C	555	183	3.033 : 1

The longest odds in Triggo's favour are provided by arrangement C. So he colours the dice accordingly.

PROBLEM 326.—THE LOGOCRATS

A set of Low's cartoons goes to: William Boyd, Edradour, Dalmuir, Glasgow.

Nine points are awarded. CALIBAN

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

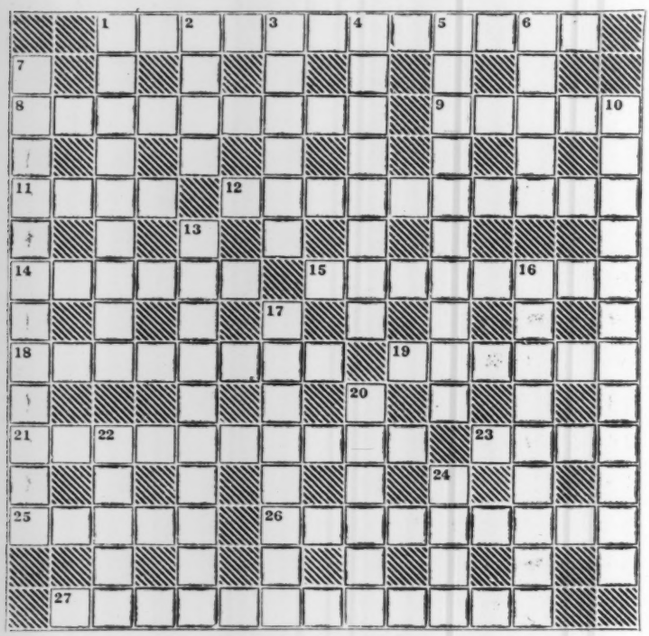
In addition, a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points a solver is entitled to a prize consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10*s*. Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150. Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope, but on separate sheets of paper.

Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

[U.S.A. Competitors. The Editor regrets that the prizes offered in our Week-end Competitions cannot apply to American competitors.]

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 476

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is

C. E. Youngman, Charsfield Hall, Woodbridge, Suffolk

ACROSS

1. Does this consist of notes made in a legislative assembly? (12)
8. Swelling caused by the heat perhaps. (9)
9. This gives you an impression of the type you see. (5)
11. The reverse of back. (4)
12. Like a ship that is short of Naval ratings? (10)
14. Cracks in China? (6)
15. People who are late may be named on it. (8)
18. Harsh description of the trembler? (8)
19. Put the U.S.S.R. up to making the change. (6)
21. Not an institution of slavish ecclesiastics. (10)
23. St. Wilfrid's chaplain. (4)
25. Always poetical? That *is* weird. (5)
26. He will give you an extremely polished appearance. (9)
27. Smith is overshadowed by it in Hamlet. (12)

DOWN

1. Adding the noughts—in code. (9)
2. Jean never comes in. (4)
3. The children's brains. (6)
4. When on account it is usually for the second time of asking. (8)
5. Not a peerless building in this country. (10)
6. The "left, right" of the oarsman. (5)
7. Not the arm of the church. (12)
10. Nonsensical bows. (12)
13. Shooting stars perhaps. (10)
16. Angry about the raid that didn't quite come off. (9)
17. These railway services do not run underground in built-up areas. (8)
20. The act of getting a lettuce in. (6)
22. Mr. Fox's ground. (5)
24. The Archbishop hangs his vestment up. (4)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

P	I	N	S	A	N	D	N	E	E	D	L	E	S	
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LECTURES AND MEETINGS

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

A Course of Three Lectures, entitled "POÈTES MAUDITS, POÈTES CHRÉTIENS?" will be given by PROF. JEAN-MARIE CARRÉ (Professor of Comparative Modern Literatures at the Sorbonne) at UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON (Gower Street, W.C.1) on MAY 1st, 3rd and 4th at 5.30 p.m. At the First Lecture the Chair will be taken by Prof. L. M. Brandin, Ph.D., M.A., L.-ès-L. (Fielden Professor of French and Romance Philology in the University).

A Lecture on "LE RÔLE DU CONSEIL D'ÉTAT" will be given (in French) by M. RAPHAEL ALIBERT (Maître des Requêtes honoraire au Conseil d'État; Professeur honoraire à l'École libre des Sciences Politiques) at UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON (Gower Street, W.C.1) on MAY 3rd at 5.30 p.m.

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A LECTURE FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC
on
"NUTRITION AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH"
by
PROFESSOR V. H. MOTTRAM, M.A.
(Professor of Physiology in the University of London-King's College of Household and Social Science)
will be given in
THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE,
on Friday, 28th April, 1939, at 8.15 p.m.
Chair to be taken by Dr. Robert Hutchison,
President of the Royal College of Physicians.
Admission Free. A number of reserved seats free on application to Secretary, B.M.A. House, Tavistock Square London, W.C.1.

LEEDS. Progressive Literature Conference, April 30th, 2.30 p.m., Victory Hotel. John Strachey. Tickets (1s.), 85 Woodhouse Lane.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. Sunday, April 23rd, at 11 a.m., RT. HON. LORD SNELL, P.C., C.B.E.: "THE BRITISH EMPIRE AND WORLD PEACE." 6.30 p.m., Concert Chamber Music. Admission free. Visitors welcome.

THE ORDER OF THE GREAT COMPANIONS, 30 Montague Street, W.C. (near British Museum). Meetings on Sundays at 11 a.m. Minister-General: REV. WILL HAYES. April 23rd: "What Animals Think of Us."

THE ETHICAL CHURCH, Queensway, Bayswater, W.2. Sunday, April 23rd, at 11 a.m., MISS ADELA COIT: "KAREL CAPEK'S PLAY, 'THE MOTHER.'" 7 p.m., DR. W. SCHUTZ: "POLITICS AS RELIGION AND AS SCIENCE."

DUDLEY COLLARD on "SOVIET JUSTICE," Friday, April 21st, at 8 p.m. S.C.R., 98 Gower Street, W.C.1.

ARTISTS' INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION. Anthony Blunt: "PATRONAGE AND ART." Wed., 26th, 8.15. Group Theatre Rooms, 9 Gt. Newport Street. 1s.

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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS
Rates and all information on page 627.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By DIVES

GILT-EDGED WEAKNESS—ANGLO-IRANIAN AND WAR—
BUDGET QUERIES—MR. KEYNES AND POLICY

THE London Stock Exchange did not accept the rosy view which Wall Street momentarily held of President Roosevelt's appeal to the aggressors. The week opened with lower prices; and, with business dwindling away, prices continued to fall until a spasm of real weakness was seen in the gilt-edged market on Wednesday. An interesting feature was the sharper fall in the short-dated gilt-edged stocks than in the long-dated, and this was attributed to special selling from the discount houses. It has been the practice of the discount houses to borrow at the low day-to-day rates recently prevailing and to reinvest in the short-dated Government stocks which allowed a handsome margin in yield. A rush to sell the short-dated issues in the event of war would have landed the discount houses in heavy losses, so that it is not surprising to see them reducing their commitments in the gilt-edged market. The following table shows the attractive yields which are now obtainable on the shorter-dated Government issues :—

	Price	Yield Per cent. Flat Gross	Redemption Adjusted Gross
4½% Conversion, 1940-44 ..	102¾	£4 8 9	£2 16 6
5% Conversion, 1944-64	105⅝x.d.	4 14 6	3 6 3
National Defence 2½% 1944-48 ..	93	2 13 9	4 0 0
Funding 2½% 1952-57	88	3 3 0	4 0 6
Funding 2½% 1956-61	81⅞	3 1 0	4 1 6
National Defence 3% 1954-58 ..	92	3 5 3	3 14 9

Apart from this fall in "shorts," tobacco shares have been weaker than most industrial shares on the fear of increased taxation. In fact, the shadow of the Budget has begun to creep over all the industrial markets.

* * *

A few weeks ago I recommended the equity shares of certain oil producers in Trinidad and Venezuela as war "hedges," with emphasis on Trinidad Petroleum Development. A correspondent has asked why Anglo-Iranian Oil shares should have fallen since March 8th from 98*s.* 9*d.* to the present price of 78*s.* 9*d.* In 1938 the highest price was 112*s.* 6*d.* The fall is, of course, a corollary of the political crisis, for it is suggested that in the event of war the company might not be able to export its oil from the Persian Gulf. I think this risk has been greatly exaggerated. As long as Great Britain retains command of the seas Anglo-Iranian will be able to export its oil from the Persian Gulf. Even if the Mediterranean is closed, the extra cost of sending the oil round the Cape of Good Hope would not work out at much more than ½*d.* per gallon at the present level of tanker freight rates. Moreover, if the shipment of oil westwards from the Persian Gulf proved difficult, there would probably be some arrangement for Persian oil to displace Californian oil in the far-Eastern markets and for Californian oil to come eastwards through the Panama Canal to take the place of Persian oil in the British market. The Anglo-Iranian Company has the war advantage of having the most prolific oilfields in the world. Output, which was slightly lower last year at 10,195,000 tons, could be expanded rapidly. The 1938 accounts, however, may show some falling off in profits on account of the fall in the prices of refined oils and I think it would be prudent to assume a dividend of 22½ per cent. against 25 per cent. in the previous year. At the current price of 79*s.* 4½*d.* the shares would return a yield of £5 13*s.* 3*d.* per cent. on dividends of 22½ per cent. and even on a dividend of 20 per cent. the yield would be £5 0*s.* 9*d.* per cent. It is a long time since Anglo-Iranian shares were standing on a yield basis of over 5 per cent.

* * *

Next Tuesday the market will know whether Sir John Simon considers it necessary to augment his prospective revenue either by fresh taxes or by enlarging the loan programme so far authorised for the next fiscal year. Allowing for the shipping subsidies and the cost of the A.R.P. plus Territorial Army expansion, total outgoings for which provision must be made can hardly be less than £1,300 millions. Against this, the Chancellor will have £350 millions of borrowed money, together with a tax revenue which he may put at £925 millions without straining optimism too far. Will he bridge the £25 million gap by asking for more borrowing powers, or will he impose fresh taxes? In the latter event it is to be hoped that he will confine himself to imposts on the consumption of non-essential articles. An attempt to counteract the inflationary effects of deficit finance by further taxes on spendable incomes would be open to the objection that the brake would be applied indiscriminately to the wheels. If, on the other hand, Sir John decides to "borrow the lot," the need will be the more urgent both to provide against the likelihood of shortages of labour and materials—and this means a Ministry of Supply with the widest powers to enforce priorities—and also to ensure that savings are not diverted from the gilt-edged market either by expatriation or employment in non-essential production.

* * *

In the *Times* this week Mr. J. M. Keynes has been urging that loan expenditure even on the scale so far authorised for 1939-40 must involve Government control over the use of savings if interest rates are not to rise inconveniently. He emphasises rightly a point which is often overlooked—that Government borrowing does not represent a net subtraction from national savings. Loan expenditure creates incomes; a proportion of these incomes is saved; hence, provided the borrowing does not precede the spending (thus creating a temporary stringency in the capital market), there is no reason to fear insufficiency of savings to finance loans of any extent. Given big enough borrowing, the approach to the physical conditions of inflation—shortage of labour and goods—might be rapid; but borrowing could proceed smoothly, with an all-important proviso: there must be no export of flight capital, and steps might have to be taken to protect the sterling exchange by rationing imports and the demands of the luxury trades. How quickly we shall approach full employment of labour and plant is a matter of conjecture. In estimating that such conditions are likely to be attained within the coming fiscal year, Mr. Keynes may not be allowing sufficiently for crisis-restriction of private capital investment—particularly in view of the fact that factory extensions for armament production have in many cases reached completion. There can be no gainsaying, however, his main contention—that the Government's policy should be to avoid any rise in interest rates. This means that the banking system must be kept liquid, and that no attempt should be made at present to finance loan expenditure by means other than Treasury Bills. If pressure on the sterling exchange becomes more severe, there should be no hesitation in establishing Exchange Control.

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Company Meeting

EAGLE STAR INSURANCE COMPANY

SIR EDWARD MOUNTAIN'S ADDRESS

PRESIDING at the annual general meeting of the Eagle Star Insurance Company, Limited, held on April 13th, in London, Sir Edward Mountain, Bart., J.P., in moving the adoption of the report and accounts, said (in part) that in the Life Department 3,097 new policies were issued for £10,522,804 gross, of which £209,543 was reassured, and the premium income in the current funds had increased by over a quarter of a million pounds. The expense ratio now stood at 13 per cent. of the premium income, and it was a matter of satisfaction that during the past four years it had shown a steady and continuous decline. The gross rate of interest earned by the current funds was £4 18*s.* 11*d.* per cent. A transfer of £40,000, as an interim payment, had been made from the current fund non-participating life business to the shareholders' profit and loss account. The total assets of the Life Department (including both current and closed funds) now exceeded 16½ millions, being an increase of £541,160 during the year. The current sinking fund and capital redemption account had expanded during the year by approximately £85,000 and now stood at over £644,000.

The valuation of these two closed funds was made at the end of 1938 on the same stringent basis as on the last occasion. In the star fund a surplus of £705,677 was shown which enabled the directors to maintain the reversionary bonus of 4 per cent. per annum. In the sceptre fund the surplus was £145,178, and they were able to repeat the record rates of bonus declared five years ago.

The premium income was £808,464 for the year. The loss ratio was 41.24 per cent. and the commission and expense ratio was 52.57 per cent., leaving a profit of £54,447 or 6.73 per cent. This was a very satisfactory profit, although in some exceptional years their profit had been bigger. It was interesting to remember that in that department, as with several others, the business, with the exception of withdrawals and additions, remained substantially the same. There were naturally more fires in some years than in others.

The premium income from ordinary personal accident and sickness insurance showed an increase from £81,258 to £89,565, while the premiums on special contracts, the liabilities under which terminated at the close of the year, amounted to £14,536. An amount of £12,995 was transferred to profit and loss account.

In the general insurance account, which includes various miscellaneous classes of business now shown separately, there was an increase in premium income which now exceeded half a million. The results had again been very satisfactory, a profit of £94,973 being carried to profit and loss account.

The premiums in the employers' liability account increased to £247,242, and a profit of £1,407 was carried to the profit and loss account.

Despite the difficult conditions obtaining in motorcar insurance, last year's results showed an improvement on the previous year. The premium income was £1,607,231. The claims paid and outstanding amounted to £918,715, and after providing for expenses a sum of £18,401 was transferred to profit and loss account. With all departments it had been their custom that their reserves should be in excess of their requirements. With their motor department this had always been the case, but the heavy burdens cast on them during the last few years had made it necessary still further to increase their reserves.

During the last two years they had increased these by £130,000 in order to have an excess in their reserves, in that department as they had in others. They now had a total reserve of 74.6 per cent. of their premium income, which was 5.3 per cent. over the reserve at the end of 1937.

In the marine account £320,485 was brought forward which, with the net premiums for 1938, £275,060, gave a total of £595,545. Claims paid during the past year and for all previous years amounted to £220,905. Expenses, including taxes, amounted to £56,532, and they were able to carry forward £318,108, 115.65 per cent. of the premium income.

With the credit balance brought in of £294,521, net interest from investments of £358,392 and transfers from the various trading accounts, there was available a total of £954,055. Of that the payment of the dividends absorbed £328,204 (which, it would be observed, was more than covered by the net interest earnings alone), and after making provision for taxation, expenses and transferring £50,000 as an additional claims reserve to the motor insurance account, there was carried forward a balance of £402,134 against £294,521 brought in.

The directors had always been desirous that the company should assist in any way it could in the important question of national defence, and some years ago they had decided that those of the staff who joined the Territorial Army should receive, in addition to their ordinary holidays, special leave to attend camp with full pay during that period.

In conclusion, he wished to thank all the members of the staff and agents for the support they had given to the company during the past year, and to add that he thought they might all look forward to the future with confidence, subject, of course, to the international situation.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted, and the proposed dividend of 30 per cent. was approved.

Company Meeting

NORWICH UNION LIFE INSURANCE SOCIETY

MR. ERNEST HICKS' ADDRESS

THE 131st annual general meeting of the Norwich Union Life Insurance Society was held on April 18th at Norwich.

Mr. Ernest Hicks (the President) said that it was a matter of great satisfaction to the directors that they were able to submit a report which showed continued progress. Indeed, in the matter of new business they had again established a record. The total funds were increased by £1,073,405, and now stood at £48,123,716. The net amount of new business, after deduction of re-assurances, was £11,755,700, and of this 69 per cent. was obtained from the United Kingdom—an increase of £500,772 over their previous record.

They were glad to be able to report, particularly in these times, a further reduction in the expense ratio to 14.28 per cent. This represented a fall of .37 per cent. in the year, and, when applied to their premium income of £4,551,477, meant a cash saving of no less than £16,840. Their mortality experience had again been extraordinarily favourable and indeed represented a record for the Society.

During the year there had been some increase in the gross rate of interest at which new money could be invested, but unfortunately this had been accompanied by an increase in the rate of income-tax, while as investments made some years ago fell in it was impossible to reinvest the money at the old rates. The result had been a fall of 3*s.* 5*d.* per cent. in the net rate of interest earned on their total funds. This net rate was still, however, £4 2*s.* 7*d.* per cent., which in present circumstances was a very satisfactory one. Their reserves were held on the basis which assumed a net earned rate of only 2½ per cent.

The past year had seen a further considerable fall in the market values of Stock Exchange securities, but, owing to the conservative policy adopted by the board in past years, the margin in their favour between the present market values and the values at which they appeared in the balance sheet was a very considerable one.

Although they had never transacted life business in Canada, the Board felt that the time had now come when they should set up their own organisation to deal directly with their financial interests there. They were establishing a financial committee for Canada, of which Mr. Henry Borden, a nephew of the late Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Borden, who had been so well known throughout the Empire, had consented to be the chairman. The report was adopted.

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